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The Greatest Universal Sureties

The Creator's Existence and The Creature's Function

Translated by

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1929 – 2013 AD

- Born in the Euphrates Island

- Doctorate of the Fundamentals of the Islamic Law, Al-Azhar University

- Undertook several scientific, educational and administrative positions in the Faculty of Shari'a until he occupied its Deanship

- Was a member of the Royal Academy of Civilization Researches.

- Wrote more than sixty works, some of which have been translated into other languages. The most important thereof are:

- The Greatest Universal Sureties
- Jurisprudence of the Prophet's Biography with a Brief of the History of the Rightly Guided Caliphate
- Jihad in Islam: How to understand and practice it?
- Ancestralism is a Blessed Age, not an Islamic School
- The 'Ata'ite Aphorisms: Explanation and Analysis (14-)
- Women between the Tyranny of the Western System and the Mercy of Islamic Law
- Monotheistic Schools and Modern Philosophies
- Mamo Zain: A Love Story Grew in the Earth and Sprouted in the Sky
- The Approach of Human Civilization in the Qur'an
- Refuting the Illusions of the Dialectical Materialism
- The Equivocation of the Renewal of Jurisprudence Fundamentals / Dialogues for a New Century
- Dark and Light Growths
- The Role of Religions in the Global peace / Dialogue with the West
- Lectures on Comparative Jurisprudence
- Love in the Qur'an
- Islam is the Refuge of all Human Societies
- The Beginnings of my Intellectual Work
- Islam and the West
- Personalities Attracted my Attention
- Error Never Afflicts it
- Such is my father
- These are their Problems
- And these are our Problems
- Of Allah's Fate in His Servants
- The Human: Obligated or Given Choice?
- Interest Restrictions in Islamic Law
- Selections of the Friday Oratories 1, 2, 3
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2. What Makes Man Need Authentic Theology Regarding the Universe and Life and its Requirements:

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3. The Position of Creed in Relation to the Entire Islamic Structure:

The Islamic structure is comprised of three elements, which are theology, worship and legislation – The pillar of all of this is the creed – Because of that, it is valid to use ‘the religion’ to refer to the creed alone – The contents of the creed have not differed from the time of Adam to the sending of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him – ‘Islam’ is the ancient and perennial name of this creed – The true religion is one and is not multiplied - That which has developed and changed with the sending of Prophets is only the legislation. 99 - 103

Part One: Divinity

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Establishing Allah’s existence, Mighty and Majestic, and what follows it has two methods: the top down method and the bottom up method 105 - 108

The Top Down Way:

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5. Sight 6. Speech: its meaning and its evidence – The Mu‘tazilah and their opinion regarding Allah’s speech, Mighty and Majestic is He – It would have been perfectly within our capacity not to present the differing of the Mu‘tazilah and their opinion had it not been the orientalist plot that delved into this issue falsely – The claim that the differing between the Mu‘tazilah and the vast majority of Muslims regarding the attribute of speech originates from a debate between the Muslims and the men of the Church. 7. Life **156 - 170**

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the phenomenon of revelation as it is articulated by the historical reports and their necessitation of the Prophet's Messengership and his receiving of the Qur'ān from Allah – The several states that the Messenger passed through during the beginning of revelation make thinking that revelation is psychical inspiration a form of madness – The continuing of revelation indicates the same about the reality of revelation – 1) The clear distinction between the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth – 2) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would be asked about certain matters and he would not give an answer until a verse from the Qur'ān came down – 3) The Messenger was unlettered – 4) The Prophet's truthfulness with his people necessitates his truthfulness with his Lord. **219-225**

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the phenomenon of revelation as it is articulated by the historical reports and their necessitation of the Prophet's Messengership and his receiving of the Qur'ān from Allah – The several states that the Messenger passed through during the beginning of revelation make thinking that revelation is psychical inspiration a form of madness – The continuing of revelation indicates the same about the reality of revelation – 1) The clear distinction between the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth – 2) The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would be asked about certain matters and he would not give an answer until a verse from the Qur'ān came down – 3) The Messenger was unlettered – 4) The Prophet's truthfulness with his people necessitates his truthfulness with his Lord. **219-225**

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Darwinism and its critique – In conclusion: after all of this, what does the scale of scientific vision register for this subject? – The nature of this struggle that we have examined is a nature of perplexity and confusion, not a nature that has a methodical progression in scientific research – Why do some people insist on clinging to these confused hypotheses despite their faith in their confusion? – The miracle of the divine refutation of these hypotheses. **320 -342**

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There is no Sovereignty Except for Allah

Man's duty is to implement Allah's rule on earth: these words are the result of all the aforementioned realities – It is not for man to legislate for himself – A slave's claim to legislate is to claim to legislate alongside Allah – The Qur'ān's elucidation of this reality – The hypocrites' curious argument: Allah has commanded us to establish justice and therefore it is upon to move towards that in the way we want – If this were true, all nations would thus be adhering to Allah's commands because all of them claim to be following the path of justice – Another false excuse – The claim that the Islamic Revealed Law is not suitable for application apart from a few short periods in Islamic history – The answer to this false claim – Using fabricated history and events that never happened as proof – The facts of history are not taken from the mouths of its enemies – Supplicating and beseeching Allah. 465 - 478

In the Name of Allah, the All Merciful, the Most Merciful

Introduction to the Eighth Edition

All praise is to Allah, praise that complies with His blessings and compensates His abundance. Our Lord, for You is all praise as befits the majesty of Your countenance and the might of Your authority. May blessings and peace be upon our Master Muḥammad, who was sent as a mercy to all of creation, and upon his family, his companions, forever and ever until the Last Day.

To proceed; this is another of the steps of revision, verification and addition that Allah has given me success in with respect to serving this book, in its publication and its revision, so that as much effort as possible can be invested towards its perfection.

In one of the previous editions, under the discussion on proving the existence of Allah, may His majesty be manifest, I added a brief demonstration to prove the incoherence of materialistic philosophy and how it leans on the precepts of science and the principles of logic, in both its materialistic principles and its historical branches. That was before the Lord, Mighty and Majestic, favoured me to publish my book *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*, which I devoted to this subject.

Then, in a subsequent edition, I added a detailed study that included a presentation of the most important modern theories that postulate that human beings have evolved from lower animal forms. This was followed by a discussion of its scientific proofs which revealed its disarray and falsehood, and showed that it is nothing more than

fragmentary suppositions that lack scientific evidence with no firm grounding in science or even scientific research.

After that, this book was printed offset many times, without any addition or alternation, and it was only time constrictions that prevented me from reviewing and re-examining the text and filling in any gaps and adding further discussions.

As for now, indeed Allah has strengthened and prepared me, with His favour and grace, with a few moments of time and allowed me to examine the discussions of this book once again, seeking to be more meticulous this time in the discussions which are certainly the most serious of things that the human being can devote his intellect to from the issues of existence and its sciences.

I expended all of my efforts so that I would not pass over an expression that needed more clarity than my faculties had achieved except after replacing it with an expression that was more indicative and illustrative, and that I would scrutinize any word that may be misconstrued (in the sphere of accurately expressing something from the attributes of Allah the Exalted and his actions) and does not befit His Absolute Perfection, Mighty and Majestic, and does not proclaim Him above every equal and counterpart, so I exchanged them for that which is more accurately indicative of the desired meaning and further from meanings that are customary for the creation.

There is no doubt that the scope of expression is tiny in front of the human being when he wants to talk about Allah and His attributes and actions and delve into the intricacies of divine matters. Therefore, many terms are not suitable for expressing in this situation because they are formulated to indicate limits, dimensions and biases, which are from the conditions of the creation.

Then I expended more effort in additions and details that I was asked to make for the necessity of clarification and the removal of ambiguity. Some of this appeared in the body of the book and some of it I presented as additional material in its appropriate place.

One of the most important of these necessary additions was an examination of apostasy and its causes, for I felt that an extreme necessity calls for a continuation of this research and its affirmation, in detail, in the body of this book.

If my concern has been lacking in previous editions then the quality of lacking is my affair, and because this necessity had not emerged in society before. Once again I began moving about the ideas of some of the rising generation, false concepts that have no foundation in apostasy and its causes, and perhaps their awakening is a response that is stirred up by emotions and was in need of the precepts of science and knowledge.

One of the most important reasons that call the researcher to expand on what he has written are the unforeseen intellectual and social circumstances which themselves are imposed upon society for various reasons.

* * *

Nonetheless, I have expended new effort in serving this book, and I hoped that it would take another step towards the perfection it aspires to. I hope that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, protects me from everything that may thwart my actions and nullify my reward, begging him, Mighty and Majestic, to protect me from the evil of my own soul and to favour me with the blessing of sincerity for His noble countenance.

Likewise, I turn to every Muslim brother to have sincere advice for the sake of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, hoping that He will not be sparing towards me with his notes and that he will not hesitate to remind me of any slip that may have escaped me. And Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is the One Whose Help is sought to gather us upon the truth and to liberate us from the evil of our own souls and our passions, and we ask Him to make all of us soldiers for the Truth and servants of its people.

Damascus, 19 Rabī' Al-Ākhir, 1399/18 April, 1979

Doctor Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān Al-Būfī

Introduction to the Second Edition

All praise be to Allah ...

All praise be to Allah, the Possessor of every success, the One who inspires every goodness and guides to every truth.

All praise be to Allah ... I say it in a loud voice and with all of my sensory organs and my heart ... the Truth has indeed inspired me and made me aware of the way to indicate Him and He has burdened me with a pen to defend Him. I would not be suited for anything of this were it not for the abundance of His benevolence and the magnitude of His favour. Indeed from Him and to Him is every grace. For Him and by Him is all praise.

About two years ago I wrote what Allah inspired me to write regarding the evidences for His necessary and eternal existence and the evidences for man's slavehood to Him and his commitment to a momentous and great responsibility towards Him.

I made it clear that these evidences are not hard for the intellect to comprehend; they are not a barricade that requires deep penetration or a long distance that requires great effort to traverse. Rather, it is the fabricated veils motivated by objectives, passions and hatred; they are what gives the illusion of an obstacle and they are what has made some of them believe that there is hardship ... so the matter must arise for the one who indicates that the obstacle is illusory. The hardship is far from my imagination and the Truth is presenting Himself to the eyes and is close to the intellects.

My work was in what I had written, drawing attention to the clear, close and apparent evidences, not the invention of remote and unknown proofs. All my efforts were spent in working with those scientific proofs that are common amongst intellects and in all places and times, not with one specific type from amongst them that may only

be understood by a specific category of people or not dealt with except by those of a distinguished civilization in a confined historical epoch.

Indeed Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wanted—and for Him is the praise that my tongue is incapable of giving—for this work to be given its fruits. The coming generation have turned towards it from every class and direction and many researchers and educated people have considered it, despite their differing opinions and backgrounds.

As for the believers it has increased them in faith and with it they have persisted in their tireless effort to call to the Truth.

As for the freethinkers, those who in their hearts faith has not prospered but rather some sort of passion or goal, and likewise their intellects have not enslaved or held sway over their consciousness, so many of them have found in it what they were looking for. They said that they would often study it and they would end their confused intellectual journey amongst wandering trends of theories and delusions, and come to the tranquillity of faith in Allah the Exalted and guidance regarding their own true nature, shading themselves in the shadow of conclusive scientific proofs and not relying on some incense from feelings and soothing fantasies. Amongst these people were those who called to the doctrines of dialectical materialism, satisfied with the various atheistic theories.

As for other people, they place their psychical desires as a priority before their thinking and intellectual lives, so there is no doubt that this book was for them a futile attempt, because the one who only attaches second or third rank importance to scientific and intellectual values in his life, it is of no benefit to him to deal at all with these values. Rather, it is foolish and useless to bind him to them when he has already submitted completely to his desires and his prior aspirations and hopes! It is only natural that one of these people will not speak frankly to you about this action of his, and if he did so there would be no value or meaning left for his subjugation of the intellect.

Many of these people used to oppose this book, after a phase of jockeying for position, with silent indignation ... just silent indignation! I believe that this silent indignation is nothing but greater evidence than the clear evidences that this book of mine draws attention to. It suffices us regarding these people that they finish at this silent indignation and stop there. Indeed it is the most profound expression of the reality of their state and their excuse ... it suffices us that this silent state of theirs be a decisive proof against them.

Some of these people were opposing it recently, by declaring their doubts regarding all the judgments of the intellect! They are in need—in what they claim—of something that will confirm for them that the rules of the intellect have no deceit in them.

The response of these people is plain and clear. You are able to extract the reality of their behaviour and their lives with ease.

Indeed the one who is not confident in the intellect's judgments does not value the way he lives his life or his various worldly relations with others based upon the more accurate suggestions of the intellect and its rules. The one who is not confident in the intellect's judgments will not govern his thinking life according to various philosophical principles claiming that by them he has followed the insight of the intellect and the evidences of science. If someone is not confident in the intellect's judgments, the intellect will not co-operate with him in all of his interests and various social affairs, such that when he himself comes face to face with the evidences for having faith in Allah and what follows from that, he declares all of a sudden his lack of confidence in the intellect and he cuts the intellect off saying, 'I do not know you and I will not co-operate with you!'

Indeed the one who is not confident in the judgments of the intellect and does not see good in following it, he is only a man who has completely cut off his intellect during his worldly journey ... and he does not seek guidance from it in establishing a livelihood

or gaining some benefit or delineating the way he behaves ... and a person like this, in the words of all people, is called “mad”! The Dīn⁽¹⁾ graciously accepts the excuse of a person like this; let him disregard the realities of the universe for as long as it suits him and let him disbelieve in them for as long as disbelief suffices him. No blame is attached to the madman.

* * *

Have I changed anything from the book’s discussions or added to them?

I have not made any radical changes to the contents of the book, but I have checked two things for the sake of further clarity and to further reveal the truth.

First of all, I simplified some points that are part of the method for researching the truth, and I touched upon a few complicated problems and this was stressed to me by some brothers who read the text and gave me their notes. I simplified the discussion regarding the manner of “circumstantial evidence” and “the proof of analogy based on the cause”. I tried to remove from the discussion regarding them, as best I could, the dry, scientific terminology and style and I opened the horizons of their relationship to human thought with more diverse examples that are connected to various aspects of life.

Secondly, I provided more detail on dialectical materialism and its scientific value, and that was done in the course of discussing the proofs for Allah’s existence, Mighty and Majestic is He. It is detail that I failed to provide in the first edition.

But in addition to that I did change a few words and sentences that failed to clearly convey their intended meaning, or which brought to mind notions that do not befit His Majesty—from either the formal literary standpoint or the objective standpoint—about the perfection

(1) (tn): i.e. the religion of Islam.

of Allah the Exalted and His divinity, and which included a tendency away from the desired scientific examination.

Most of these sentences that I have changed are only because of the virtue of some Muslim brothers who shared their comments with me regarding things I had missed and drew my attention to them, and I truly thank them in this life and I ask Allah, Mighty and Majestic, to reward them for it in the next.

Out of all the comments that I received, there was a proposal that I should include in the second edition of the book a detailed scientific refutation of that person from Lebanon who wrote some senseless drivel couched in some slogans from the expressions of the people of science and its terminology⁽¹⁾. Then some simple souls from amongst the people refused not to raise it in their strange way, which they had used to criticise it, to the level of researchers, revolutionaries and heroes.

I examined the book and I found that in all of its discussions that it brought up there were three branches. As for the first branch, its conversation therein was restricted to old, oft-repeated words about religion and science, and torrential scientific progress has left no place in the intellect for faith in Allah!

As for the second branch, it deals with the subjects of fatalism and choice along with free will and divine decree, and that represents a problem that is embodied in the story of Iblīs.

As for the third and final branch, it deals with a demonstration of what they see as a genuine scientific explanation for the story of this existence and what it contains, and it is a dialectical materialist explanation of history.

I do not think that there is a way for a book to refute all three of these branches that is better than reprinting the book *The Greatest Universal Sureties* as it is.

(1) He is the author of the book *Naqd al-Fikr al-Dīnī* [Critiquing Religious Thought].

The subject of compulsion and choice—and it is an ancient clumsy window that the proponents of heresy and its passions still seek refuge in—is explained in this book of ours in a clear, detailed and scientific fashion. Based on what I gathered from my experience with my students in the university, there is no need to add anything or explain anything. I also do not need to add anything in order to refute the one who wrote that senseless drivel in those three branches of his, other than for me to say to him:

Indeed the realities of compulsion and choice are not taken from the escapades of al-Hallāj or some of the Sufis or weak and fabricated traditions and narrations. All we have in this regard is the way of scientific research based on sound narration and transmission which you should have studied beforehand.

As for the subject of dialectical materialism and its explanation of history according to its foundations, it is not appropriate that I occupy the mind of the reader with this in this introduction. Rather, I have assigned it to the proper place for this subject in the book.⁽¹⁾ The free reader will not find any need for more explanation in order to use it to refute the scientific drivel that is presented by those who have scientific criticism.

As for his discussion regarding the first division (and it is the division from which the remaining chapters of the book are spread out) and his repeated habitual speech about the Dīn ... and science ... and the scientific renaissance ... which we say, after moving the reader to the natural place for this discussion in this book of ours, that it is:

It is upon this “scientific” critic—and he is the man who does not want science to diminish his right nor betray his scientific conscience—to place us, before everything, in front of a scale or a method of

(1) I recently wrote a separate book on dialectical materialism entitled *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*

research with which to disclose for us the difference between the path of scientific research and that of haphazard research. The distinguishing factor is between the result with which science will break a law that cannot be refuted and the result which science sees as nothing more than theoretical or hypothetical or fantasy.

And if not, then how can the “scientific critic” make us nod our heads in approval when he bundles together all the varying opposing ideas from the various researchers and then calls all of it science and precision and describes all of its proponents as being the well-versed pillars of modern science?

How can Bertrand Russell, Descartes, Pavlov, Marx and Freud be the authorities and the pillars of modern science when they have differed amongst themselves in many different ways? How can we understand that all of their opinions and theories are true science that the intellect must submit to when they are opinions and theories that vary and contradict one another?

Did Darwin, the proponent of the theory of evolution, believe in dialectical materialism, which is insisted upon by the advocates of historical materialism? What is the value of that theory of his from a scientific perspective knowing that he died and had not finished researching the matter, without taking anything away from it? Where is there a place for the hundreds of scholars who have composed long writings in criticism of his theory and have taken it to pieces and ridiculed it?

Did Marx believe in this theory of Darwin's? Did both of them believe in Freud's theory?

Did the proponents of dialectical analysis for historical events believe in the same thing as the proponents of mechanical analysis?

Indeed, all of these varying gloomy opinions and theories, they only exist in the scientific orbit that the researcher desires. They travel

with his protection and seek guidance from his guidance, and their authors are—in the words of this scientific charlatan—the authorities and pillars of modern science.

Which of these theories is considered science that agrees with reality and which of them is considered ignorance that deviates from it? Or are they all considered science, despite their contradictions and disagreements, and are their proponents, in spite of that, considered to be the authorities and those firmly-grounded in science?

What is required of the man who believes in Allah? Is it required of him to choose a stipulated theory from amongst all these theories, and upon what basis should he choose? Or does it suffice him to disbelieve in Allah and then close his eyes and support whichever one he wants?

And why is it that this scientific charlatan does not inform us, before anything else, what science is and its reality until we are, as has been proved, following the “science” that he wants?

Indeed the believers in Allah finished analysing this phenomenon of existence when they said that the series of creations in their entirety must rely, for their existence, on an essence that exists by necessity and from which existence proceeds and it does not proceed from anything else, and He is Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Based on this, none of the impossibilities, such as alternation, infinite regression, and something being preferred without anyone preferring it,⁽¹⁾ are mentioned. We see it as a scientific analysis that cannot be afflicted with any incoherence or disparity. So, what is the scientific analysis for the phenomenon of existence according to those who deny the existence of Allah?

The scientific charlatan gave an answer when he said, ‘Indeed the source of all existing things is the primordial mist.’ But when it was said, ‘What is the source of the primordial mist and what is the secret of its existence?’, he responded by saying that he did not know!!!

(1) (tn): i.e. to exist or not exist.

Then it became resolved that this ignorance is the best scientific reason upon which to base the secret of existence!! We have threatened that we will not accept this reason, so he will throw the same questions at us and attack us by saying, ‘Who created Allah?’!

This is how the man being tested with the word of science and in need of its content imagines! He thinks that Allah and the primordial mist are the same thing in their existence. Only the believers have chosen “arbitrarily” to deify the latter and abandon the former. If the meaning of existence for both of them is the same then it is absolutely just as valid to ask about the creator of Allah, Mighty and Majestic as it is to ask about the creator of the mist!!

We say to this scientific charlatan: indeed the absolute inertia is something that is contingent,⁽¹⁾ and the existence of all contingencies can only be due to the effect of something besides them. If not, then how does one of the two sides of possibility be preferred? As for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, He is the One who exists by necessity, i.e. His existence is from Himself and it does not proceed from nor is it affected by anything else, and this is the meaning of Him being a deity. For that reason, this question is not mentioned at all in respect to the Essence of Allah if the questioner is a believer in His Divinity. As for the person who does not believe in it, then the question is futile, because the import of the question differs between the questioner and the one who answers.

We then say to this man: indeed one of the Muslims who believe in Allah and His Messenger with true faith does not abandon any of the requirements of believing in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, for any motive or reason. They are not those who grant a legal⁽²⁾ quality to everything that the claimers claim is science and reality, which would force the winds of civilization upon us along with its modern trends.

(1) (tn): i.e. possible; its existence is not necessary.

(2) (tn): i.e. in the Revealed Law (*al-Sharī'ah*)

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(1) (tn): i.e. possible; its existence is not necessary.

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He knows very well that those who do this are people who are other than the Muslims who believe in Allah and His Messenger with true faith, as he knows very well that Islam is not the religion that stood in the face of the scientific renaissance and felt disgusted by it.

All that we want from this scientific charlatan, who accuses Muslim researchers of inadequacy and scientific ignorance, is to put down a scientific and fixed definition of the word "science" and to then put down for us a precise scientific method which we would consider as exemplary steps that lead to exact "science" and avoid stumbling into "ignorance"!

There is another thing that I must clarify in this introduction; and I direct it to some of the esteemed brothers from amongst the readers:

In anything of the Islamic creed that we have presented in this book, have we relied on Greek philosophy or fallacious logic? We have absolutely not done that. In what we have presented, the reader will only be shown those decisive proofs and evidences that carry their own confirmed scientific value, wherever you may look in the phases of history or whatever you may change from one language to another.

Indeed the axiom of the invalidity of alternation, infinite regression, something being preferred without anyone preferring and the coming together of opposites, all of these are well-known throughout the world, and there is nobody who possesses an intellect or logic that does not know them or deal with them, whether he feels they are established scientific laws or not.

Indeed ... indeed Greek philosophy was used for some of these laws as proofs and evidences for their method, such as that which they call "absolute naturalistic proof" with regards to the invalidity of infinite regression, but we have not turned towards any of these and avoided them completely in favour of that which is simpler, easier and closer to general intellectual life.

Regarding the method of research that we have put down as a

standard between ourselves and the readers, we have not taken from its foundations or its conventions other than the general scientific and logical values that every intellect is familiar with, even though we know that that which has been firmly fixed as a scientific law for study and research is only Islamic thought at the inception of its history.

Some people may imagine that looking for circumstantial evidence in its various kinds, or analogy based on the general cause, is something strange and familiar, and therefore must certainly be part of Aristotelian logic!

But the affirmed reality is that Greek logic does not know anything about general indications and especially circumstantial evidence⁽¹⁾. The same goes for analogy based on the cause.

As for comparative and derivative analogy that is based on similarities, which is taken from Greek logic, we have not relied on any of that in our book.

Despite that, we remind the reader that not all of Greek philosophy and Aristotelian logic is dreadful and unsound. We do not wish to completely turn away from it. Rather, there is much in it that is useful and beneficial and in it there is much that the philosophers of the Muslims and their scholars have disapproved of. Those who want to establish their ideas permanently on a scientific foundation must become accustomed to choosing what the truth is from what others bring to them instead of being negative and completely shunning it.

Another thing I say to my reading brothers:

Indeed some have become uneasy because of our defence—in commenting on the following introduction—of *ilm al-kalām*⁽²⁾ and the imams whose circumstances compelled them to write about it, and this defence of ours was comprehensive—without a doubt—and a

(1) See page 3 of *Manāhij al-Baḥth* ("Methods of Research") by the thinker of Islam Dr 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashār.

(2) (tn): i.e. scholastic theology.

critique of those who accuse them in what we see as unjustified.

We then say: there is never a cause for this constriction, for indeed this book is nothing other than an example of what has been written in *‘ilm al-kalām*, including the difference of opinions in many of the discussions and in method. This is because *‘ilm al-kalām* applies to the scientific discussions which have and continue to revolve around the principles of the Islamic creed, regardless of the type of specious argument and the method of research and discussion. Indeed all of that, by its nature, is differed over and it develops from one age to another.

Have I acted improperly in what I have undertaken in compiling this book? Am I permitted, in the field of unveiling the realities of faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, in front of the proponents of various doubts and specious arguments, not to discuss with them based on the general logical foundations that they understand and believe in?

Some of them talk about the methodology of the Qur’ān ... and the necessity of replacing all of this with the methodology of the Qur’ān.

We say to these brothers: do not make the two methodologies mutually exclusive, and do not negate one at the expense of the other.

We need to present the methodology of the Qur’ān regarding the one whose heart is focused on the principles of faith in Allah and His Messenger but still needs to strengthen it and preserve it and establish the true Islamic image in his mind without any falseness or deviation from it. We sincerely advise the like of this person not to waste his time pondering over these intellectual discussions that hover around studying specious arguments that he has no need of other than to instruct others and teach them.

But we do need the general intellectual, logical methodology that has been used by the scholars of *kalām* regarding the one who has not yet thought about the realm of faith in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He revealed to His Messenger.

If it is futile to present to these people verses of the Qur’ān and its admonitions when they do not yet believe in what is called the Qur’ān, and it is futile to turn to the one who has one of these

specious arguments engrained in his head, which we were discussing previously, and then treat it with that which some people understand of the meaning of the methodology of the Qur’ān.

I say, ‘with that which some people understand’ ... and I do not say, ‘the methodology of the Qur’ān’, because the methodology which most of the scholars of *kalām* used in their time and that we are using in this book is not outside of the methodology of the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān commands us not to devote our thoughts and our doctrines to that which we have no knowledge of. It commands us to make the intellect and its standards the arbitrators in everything that we come across in life. The Qur’ān discusses with the idol-worshippers according to the standard of “the final cause” appearing in the cosmos. The Qur’ān awakens the thoughts of the idol-worshippers to negate a partner for Allah the Exalted according to the proof of “mutual restriction” as it awakens to the necessity of Allah’s existence, Mighty and Majestic, demonstrating the axiom of the invalidity of alternation and the axiom of the invalidity of something being preferred with anyone preferring it⁽¹⁾, so what constitution do you want from the Qur’ān that is more than this, in order to be

(1) The proof of mutual restriction is found in His saying, Mighty and Majestic: **“If there was a god other than Allah in [the heavens and the earth] they would have surely been corrupted”** [Al-Anbiyā’ 21:22] and the proof of the phenomenon of the final cause is clear in those universal verses in which the Divine statement turns to the phenomenon of harmony in the creation of the universe, for example His saying: **“The sun too, run its determined course set for it by the Eminent, the All-Knowing. We have set phases for the moon until finally it becomes like an old date-stalk. The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night outrun the day: each floats in its own orbit”** [Yā Sīn 36:38-40]. The proof of the invalidity of something being preferred without anyone preferring it and the invalidity of alternation can be read in the saying of the Exalted: **“Were they created without any agent? Were they the creators? Did they create the heavens and the earth? No! They do not have faith”** [At-Tūr 52:35]

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certain that discussing with the proponents of specious arguments in conformity with the evidences and proofs that they are dealing with is from the core of the Qur'ān's methodology?!

It does not concern me, if what I have said is true, if some thinkers or sincere callers to Islam wish to differ with me. It is not a condition, for the majesty of the callers to Allah the Exalted and their exalted station and the radiance of their ideas, that they do not make mistakes in some issues, or that the research does not mislead them from being able to investigate a matter from all sides.

If this condition were true then it would require infallibility, and no-one has been described with infallibility after the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

That, then, is a summary of the ideas and notes that I wanted to establish in this introduction. I ask Allah the Exalted not to charge me in anything that I do, write or say, and not to make my portion from this book something that will negate the reward for it on the Day of Judgement, and I ask Him to encompass me in His mercy and to benefit me with the supplications of the righteous for me in the unseen realm.

Compiled in Sha'bān 1390

November 1970

Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān Al-Būṭī

Introduction to the First Edition

All praise is due to Allah, the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth. He has made the creation articulate the signs of His Existence, and with it He has unveiled the majesty of His authority. He created man and honoured him with the trust of bearing an intellect, to be the attentive ear listening to the signs in the creation and then the embracing vessel for the evidences and admonitions that He reveals. He sent the Messengers and the Prophets, continuously throughout the ages, to every nation, place and domain: to remind man of the responsibility of the intellect that He had entrusted him with and the honour of leadership and mastery in creation that He had raised him to. It is therefore not suitable for the most noble of all creatures to be the first to reject and be ignorant of the Truth.

Glory be to Him. He has made knowledge of the hidden things in His creation the path to faith in His existence and He has made the keys to the knowledge of all that the authority of the intellect alone, so that with this man would know that there is no religion without knowledge, and there is no knowledge without intellect.

Blessings and peace be upon the Seal of the Prophets Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him, who was sent with the same religion that all the Prophets before him were sent with: that there is no god but Allah alone so worship Him. He was sent with the universal Revealed Law that abrogates all the laws revealed before it, suitable for every time and place, sufficient for benefiting every individual and group from amongst humanity.

To proceed: indeed the foundation of Islam is its creed, and the essence of the creed is nothing other than faith in the existence of Allah and His uniqueness. There is no desire to carry out any of

the rulings of the Islamic Revealed Law if the creedal principles regarding it are not implanted in the heart, and there would be no desire to implant any of these principles in the heart until after having faith in the existence of the Creator, may His majesty be manifest.

Had man been left alone with his intellect, without there being between them any barrier from the inclinations of the ego or the desires of this life, or the whispering from the devils amongst mankind and the jinn—nothing would have hindered him from having faith in Allah. He would have found the entire universe to be laden with proofs articulating His existence. Then he would have found the Qur'ān alone to be the staircase to the highest levels of faith and certainty, and at that point he would not have needed a proof, a discussion, evidence or a debate. He would live without needing to think about intuitive evidences and the premises of necessities.

But Allah, Mighty and Majestic (His Wisdom willed for human beings to test one another and then He tests them to see which of them is the best in action, in order to reward them afterwards for the actions they have done and not for what He knew they would do from His pre-eternal divine knowledge) put misleading passions and desires into the guiding intellect that is in man and He made faith in the Truth and following it burdensome while making faith in falsehood and following it light and easy.

As a result, phoney arguments emerged and different veils became condensed. The bigotry of the ego came to have more power than the power of the intellect that is in people's heads. Then, all of this came together to distort the clear vision of the self-evident Truth, such that some people came to think that this truth was some sort of secret philosophy or delusional fantasy.

Because of that, this necessary reality must be reckoned in accordance with theoretical issues, in that the researcher imagines (if he is a believer who is certain of the guidance of his intellect)

all the causes of confusion and doubts that can emerge from around these theories and then he places them, with all seriousness, on the scale of scientific research. Then he imposes upon them the rays of the reflective, free intellect until it reveals their falseness, and one of two results will come of that: either its proponents will desist from embracing them and they will fight against them, so that the veracity of their research and the freedom of their intellects is made manifest, or they will continue being devoted to them and propagating them and the falseness of their intentions will be manifested and the slavery of their ideas will be revealed.

It is not appropriate for the believing researcher to feel uneasy, and this is because of the fact that he demonstrates the self-evident truths that do not need, by consensus of the intelligent, a proof; because this self-evident truth itself has transformed, in the imaginations of many people, into theories that are subject to research, reflection and discussion. We have not yet said that it is the foundation of the remaining divine commandments for mankind. If it were the case that the foundations of these commandments was faith in the existence of the shining sun in the middle of the sky there would still be people who would deny it and oppose it, and as a result a thick barrier would be set up between them and the delusions of many people.

Because of this, those before us, may Allah have mercy on them, compiled various exhaustive works and short expositions that mentioned scientific proofs and evidences for the existence of Allah, and they were happy to lower their intellects to the level of those who imagined the existence of Allah to be an obscure theory that needed many premises and explanations. They spread all of these premises and explanations and brought forth the scales of absolute intellectual thought and the scales of Greek philosophy, so that a biased researcher would not put confusion on one of the scales and then fight against it and seek a decision from it. If it were not for these

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pedantic, biased people the Muslims would have been increased as the Companions were increased by spontaneous thought, freedom of the intellect and the proofs of the Qur'ān and the universe⁽¹⁾.

Then time passed, and today we are facing a new kind of confusion even though it is clear that it is related to the confusion that passed before through the relationship of a strong brotherhood, since they give warning of having only one mother and it is: bigotry

(1) On account of this we do not see it as fair what some researchers say today, which is that the scholars of kalām have corrupted the purity of tawhīd because of the principles of philosophy, logic and debate that they have gathered in their research of tawhīd, and that it suffices them to follow the methodology of the Qur'ān and present its proofs.

We say: It is not fair to say anything like this about them, because none of the discussions of 'ilm al-kalām have been written for the one who believes in the Qur'ān and whose heart has been illuminated by its lamp. They have only been written for atheists who have relied in their atheism on philosophical confusion and deviant cults that have relied in their deviance on rational dissimulations, and they (Allah have mercy on them), while being quiet regarding the nonsense of these atheists and the prolixity of these obstinate people, their affair spreads amongst people and reaches the minds of those heedless of their way, and while they confront them and reveal the falseness of their confusion as well as the sophistry of their evidences and the corruption of their way, they have not hesitated to prefer the second over the first in response to the necessities of the Islamic call and what is known to be the judgement of Allah in that regard.

It does not damage the clarity of this truth that many of these confusions and discussions have no place today in front of the new confusions and sophistries, and we are only talking about what justifies the actions of those before in their time. Therefore, the path is one and the methodology does not differ, even though the types of confusion and deception do differ, so do we say today, in the face of these new confusions such as dialectical materialism, or the philosophy of existentialism, or the weakness of evolution, natural selection and the survival of the fittest, that we do not need to refute the sophistry of the proponents of these confusions with the proofs and evidences of science which the proponents of these confusions themselves claim to adhere to? Is it right for us to say: it suffices us to present to them the methodology of the Qur'ān when they do not know what the Qur'ān is and what its essential value is?

that dominates the person and the ego and the passions that carry away one's thought and one's intellect.

This new confusion is what is called the materialistic theory for the origin of things, the story of evolution and the new ideologies for interpreting thought and existence, as well as the state of being dazzled that scientific discoveries have left in the minds of some.

It is a confusion that has no authority in the scales of science and its proofs. Its only source of authority is the source of "anticipation", "guesswork" and "retrieval"⁽¹⁾. It seems that the factors of bigotry, passions and desires said to these three things, 'Be the scales of scientific certainty', so is that the case?

But whatever the case, the one who desires to show people the truth must negotiate the ways and problems that render the path to it difficult, regardless of how weak these confusions and problems are, and regardless of the falseness and fabrication that manifests from them. You must confront it based on the same appearance in which it claims to be acceptable to you, even if it has the appearance of science and certainty. Rather indeed, you must not laugh at all at the appearance of this masquerade, regardless of whether it is a contradictory or strange phenomenon.

Therefore we must do what those before us did, and put these modern confusions under the microscope of pure science and the pure intellect in accordance with the intellectual standards that the proponents of these confusions recognize. That will ultimately reveal either the falseness of these confusions and the falseness of whoever fabricated them or their return to the truth and their liberation from falsehood.

But slowly, for this too is insufficient.

(1) These are the names of specific methods of research amongst Westerners. We will explain them in detail along with their importance in the preface that follows this introduction.

Indeed the result is not rushing to turn (with a large group of dubious people) in an empty ring! You put the Dīn in front of one of them and they ask you for the evidence. You present him with the evidence and he says that it is taken from the Dīn! You move away from the Dīn in order to talk about the intellect and science alone, and he says to you that science only believes in experience⁽¹⁾ and observation.

For that reason, when looking at both, we find that most of what is written by the defenders of the Truth on the one side and most of the prejudiced or atheistic minds on the other; none of it contains any of these proofs or evidences.

What is the reason? The reason is the lack of there being a complete methodology with which to search for reality, before going into any discussion about reality itself. How can one desire to go with one of them along a path of knowing the truth when the truth is hidden at the end of it if he does not have with him any map of this path nor any knowledge of its stages and its twists?

What is truly strange is that we find a group of those who have studied a portion of every discipline and then claiming that they have become specialists in philosophy, logic and the methods of research—making judgements regarding many of the facts of the creed regarding the Prophets and the Last Day as they imagine and as they wish, without mastering the basic text of any method of research. Rather, you find them leaping towards it while they have blinded their eyes and their thoughts, and none of them know if they are sinking into the mazes of ignorance or into the middle of the fields of fantasy and guesswork!

Moreover, what is more strange, is that you find them declaring this leap of theirs to be science and declaring the point of departure of the Muslims and their method as dogma. The scientific reality

(1) (tn): or empirical evidence.

of religion, according to these "hotheads", is a series of ideas that began initially with soothsaying and astrology. Then it developed into magic and then it developed into prophecy, which sucked up many of the traditions and commemorations and that gave it a specific spiritual sanctity. As for the Dīn, as it is known by its Prophets, those who believe in it and those who research its evidences and proofs, it is only based on dogma.

For that reason, before looking into the assets of the Islamic creed and its proofs, we must disclose the method of looking into it so that certainties are not mistaken for conjectures and assumptions, and so that we can know: is it actually true that the source of the Dīn amongst ourselves is merely dogma while these "hotheads" derive their ideas from science and proof?

If we look at it in that way, i.e. as they say, then we must hurry and rid ourselves of a creed that has no business in our lives other than to steal our intellects and take us away from the field of science and certainty. If we look at it in the opposite way then we have made it clear for those who know well the movements of jumping and hot-headedness that this movement, if it does not break a man who advocates it or bruise his neck, it will never turn into a proof or a science.

* * *

This was running throughout my mind while I was teaching the Islamic creed at the University of Damascus, and circumstances were not yet allowing me to write down these discussions: I used these thoughts as a plan for my research. I felt that I should initially begin with a detailed preface about the method of researching reality according to Islamic thought and according to Western thought. Indeed, I felt that all of my knowledge and research would be useless unless it was backed up by this important preface.

I then followed it with another preface in which I explained the human need for a sound and true creed regarding existence and life, and

then adherence to the meaning of slavehood to the One who necessarily exists, Mighty and Majestic is He. I also clarify the connection between the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and the need for man to be guided by a specific way of thinking and acting.

After that I felt that I should begin, as many researchers have done before, by dividing the discussions of the creed into four parts:

Divinity, Prophethood, the Universe and Matters of the Unseen

Beginning with Divinity, I present the scientific evidence for the existence of the Creator, Mighty and Majestic is He, according to the clear methodology in the preface. I begin with the fundamental point of creed, in a way that combines between the persuasion of both ancient and modern thinkers, and then proceed to talk about the divine attributes in detail, explaining what is connected to each of them and responding to every potential argument against them.

I then move on to speak about Prophethood and explain the meaning of 'Prophet' and 'Messenger' and the particular characteristics of Prophets. In the course of this discussion the phenomenon of revelation must also be explained and analysed as well as the meaning of miracles and their reality and how they should be understood by science and the intellect.

I then turn to discussing aspects of the Universe, speaking about human beings, angels, jinn and the law of causality in the universe. At that juncture it will be necessary to compare the reality of human beings and their story as detailed in the Qur'ān and how they are seen by the theory of evolution. Likewise it will be necessary to have a detailed discussion about causality and occasionalism in the Universe that gathers between the requisites of science and the need for clarity.

When talking about matters of the Unseen I begin by explaining its meaning and reminding the reader of the scientific method for arriving at certainty regarding its nature. I then enumerate these

matters one by one in chronological order, i.e. starting with the signs of the Hour, then death, then the punishment in the grave, then the gathering, then the reckoning, then the scales, then the bridge and then finally Paradise and the Fire. I hope that Allah gives me success to solve every problem and refute any doubts that may hinder the path of scientific research in any way.

The following issues compelled me to write down these discussions:

1. Avoiding delving into the reality of the divine attributes and analysing them and whether they are the essence itself or other than it, and what is subordinate to both of them, while being content with the doctrine of the majority of Muslims in that regard. This is because the intelligent Muslim has the capacity not to think about that at all and to only cling to the attributes of perfection that Allah has attributed to Himself on the condition that there is no confusion in the faith in Allah that cannot be refuted unless one plunges into this discussion that has no benefit.
2. Lack of preoccupation with many of the differences that exist between the Mu'tazilah and the majority of Muslims from Ahl us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, as they are matters in which resolving them does not end in one of the two positions being disbelief, in order to make plain the confusion and probability in its evidences. Then they are not connected to any confusion regarding faith that any group of people may have today. It suffices us to adopt what the majority of Muslims from Ahl us-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have agreed upon after knowledge and evidence.
3. Lack of verbosity in mentioning the issues that do not have a decisive evidence or indisputable proof established for them. Indeed, perhaps I will not raise objections to many of them. This is because the domain here is specific to those matters that are established upon decisiveness and certainty, and moreover they

are the assets of the creed that no Muslim can deny or be ignorant of. It is known that certainties have a method that is particular to them that cannot be exchanged for anything else in order to arrive at them.

With this I ask Allah the Exalted to grant success to myself and the reader, as he is about to read this book, that we only have an open and objective mind and that He rids us of every bigotry and every evil inclination or desire. We begin, as I said previously, from the point of non-existence and from there we will go, step by step, judging by the scrupulous scientific standard, and whatever finish this path leads us to is where we will stop and hold firm its position.

Indeed it would be worthwhile for the person whose life is like a train that keeps going until death without any peace to research into that obscure ending, and what is beyond it and what is attached to it, objectively and with only the guidance of the intellect. I have not seen anything stranger than the phenomenon of a man mounting a riding animal and hastening towards an unknown destination and he is so happy with it that he does not try to ask himself, not even for a single moment, about the destination that he will arrive at and what the consequences may be.

Nonetheless, I have written down these discussions and I only desire to unveil reality and I only desire that I am rewarded by the Creator of this reality. After that the reader may desire what he likes.

Dr Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān Al-Būṭī

1st of Shawwāl, 1388 AH

In the Name of Allah, the All Merciful, the Most Merciful

Dr. Muḥammad Tawfīq Muḥammad Sa'īd

Ramaḍān al-Būṭī Introduction

Praise be to Allah, Lord of all creation, and blessings and peace be upon the Prophet who was sent as a mercy to all of creation. To proceed:

The book *Kubrā al-Yaqīniyyāt al-Kawniyyah* has achieved wide acceptance and has spread throughout the east and the west, even though some people may find difficulty in some of its researches and subject matters. However, it is due to the importance of its subject matter on the one hand and the sincerity of its author on the other that it has achieved this acceptance and spread so far.

This book was published for students in the Faculty of the Revealed Law (*Kulliyyat al-Sharī'ah*) in the year 1968, when I was a student in the second year in that Faculty. It has been published several times, garnered a great deal of interest, has been included in the curricula at a number of universities and many people have benefitted from it.

Even though its subject matter is theology according to the way of Muslim Orthodoxy (*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*), and very many books have been written on the topic, the author, the great scholar and martyr, Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī wanted to address the educated people of this age with this book and to discuss the ideas and doctrines that have spread amongst the youth of this stage of the Ummah's life, such as dialectical materialism, Darwinism and Lamarckism, in addition to some of the movements that have

professionally stirred up doubts that contradict the facts of the Islamic creed in the name of science and modernity, such as those who are affiliated with the movements that appeared in Egypt and other places that deny many unseen matters and realities of faith.

The brother, Ustādh Mahdi Lock, found that translating this book was of considerable importance with respect to the educated westerner who is looking for the truth presented in a scientific and convincing manner and is looking for tranquility for his heart so that he can be at ease and be saved from anxiety, which has overwhelmed many people. This book has responded to the westerner's desire to arrive at the truth removed from the campaigns of distortion that Islam has been exposed to in order to isolate the educated class from it.

It is hoped that Ustādh Mahdi has been able to address the westerner through speaking about the most important realities of the universe in a manner that responds to his desire and meets his passion to arrive at the most significant realities that the contemporary person must be familiar with.

I ask Allah the Exalted to reward my master, the author and martyr, for what he has offered to the contemporary person by way of writings that clarify the way of truth and felicity, and to abundantly reward and recompense the translator, since he has opened a window through which the westerner can know the truth in a language that he understands and in a manner that he accepts. Indeed He is the All-Hearing, the Answerer of Supplications.

Lastly, I thank Dār al-Fikr, who have had the merit of publishing the writings of the great scholar and martyr throughout the world, and I ask Allah for their reward and recompense.

Muḥammad Tawfīq Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī

Should we use "has" instead of "have" here?

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all creation, Who forgives sins and with Him alone is every success. There is no power or strength except in Him. As Allah has honoured this miserable slave with the completion of such a task, all I ask is that He increase the blessings He has already bestowed upon me and to make me a better believer, cleanse my heart and grant me further strength to serve Him and the Ummah of His Beloved, *ṣallā Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*.

As for the creation, I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to my beloved teacher, Ustādh 'Alī Filālī of the Qarawiyyin High School in Fes, Morocco, who read the entire book with me between 2008 and 2010. The book in your hands is not a standard text book taught in Morocco, but Ustādh Filālī often pointed out to me how he had never seen certain theological issues explained with such clarity. This is yet another indication of the rank of Imam Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, may Allah have mercy on him. While reading the chapter on seeing Allah in the Hereafter, we came across Imam al-Shāfi'ī's argument for its truth and affirmation, at which point my teacher, an adherent of the Mālikī school, said, 'When I read Mālik I am happy, but when I read al-Shāfi'ī I am happier, for whatever is missing from Mālik is found with al-Shāfi'ī, as if he is an extension of Mālik.' It is a book that often made us smile and other times weep, and the lessons we had are lessons that I shall cherish for the rest of my days. May Allah reward Ustādh Filālī immensely in this life and the next, *āmin*!

Secondly, I must thank my beloved brother Maḥmūd Ramaḍān, the grandson of the author, may Allah have mercy on him, who has

helped me massively with several translation projects and arranged for this book to be translated. He also informed me of the lessons and exams that are co-ordinated by the Naseem al-Sham website and the Umayyad Grand Masjid in Damascus, through which I was able to sit an exam and get an *ijāzah* in the text. Maḥmūd has also been extremely helpful explaining certain words and passages therein and tracking down texts that are referred to. May Allah reward him, his father and his grandfather immensely in this life and the next, āmīn!

I also ask Allah to reward my beloved teacher al-Ḥājj Abū Jā'far al-Ḥanbalī, an experienced translator of theological texts, abundantly in this life and the next, for his many helpful tips and insights, especially regarding how to render certain terms and expressions into English. He also generously allowed me to stay at his house for several weeks while I was translating the book, and thus he was always at hand whenever a query arose.

I am also indebted to the believers at Dār al-Fikr, especially Ḥasan Sālim, for their support and assistance throughout the implementation of this project. If Allah so wills, this translation will be a success and we can work towards translating more books from the legacy of this great scholar and martyr. May Allah reward them all with his bountiful favours.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I thank my wife for her proofreading, which has not been easy as she is still recovering from a long-term illness and is also studying the Book of Allah. May Allah reward her by curing her completely of all illnesses, and may He then reward her more, āmīn.

Regarding the translation itself, I only have a few notes to make. Firstly, my footnotes are preceded with either "(tn):", meaning translator's note, or "Ar.", which is to indicate the original Arabic word or expression and is sometimes followed by an explanation. All other footnotes are those of the author. I am aware that translators

usually mark their footnotes at the end, but this makes it difficult to distinguish between the author's footnotes and those of the translator. Secondly, I have done my best to find the original passages for any English works that the author has cited, and therefore I have quoted the English passages directly as opposed to translating the Arabic translations back into English. This explains why the reader might find some discrepancies between the author's quotes and my translations. Thirdly, the English explanation of the Qur'ān that I have used is *The Noble Qur'ān* by Aisha and Abdalhaqq Bewley (Norwich: Bookwork, 1436/2005), which I find to be the best there is in the English language. The āyah numberings are based on the *riwāyah* of Warsh 'an Nāfi' but I have made sure to stick to the author's āyah numberings, which are based on the *riwāyah* of Ḥafṣ 'an 'Āṣim.

May Allah make this translation of benefit to His slaves, and may He reward Imam al-Būṭī and all of his teachers and students immensely in this life and the next, āmīn.

Mahdi Lock

Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah

Friday 18th Ṣafar, 1438/18th November, 2016

1. The Scientific Method for Researching Truth According to Muslim Scholars and Others

Preface

1. The Scientific Method for Researching Reality according to Muslim Scholars and Others.
2. What Makes Man Need Authentic Theology Regarding the Universe and Life and its Requirements
3. The position of creed in relation to the entire Islamic structure.

1. The Scientific Method for Researching Truth According to Muslim Scholars and Others

Introduction

If realising the truth as it actually is is science, as they say, then the method that is used to achieve this realisation should—without a doubt—also be scientific, i.e. the method this is used should be none other than a series of true realisations in and of themselves that remove the veil from the reality that is being sought.

This is because science is not the product of anything but another science like it. Conjecture can never arrive at knowledge, and if this were not the case then two conjectural premises could bring about a definitive result, and this is clearly impossible.

Therefore, everyone who searches for the truth must use a scientific method that is not corrupted by whims and fancies. He must cling to this method and not deviate from it in any way.

This is a clear axiom that nobody can dispute.

However, it is very likely that we can ask: to what extent do Islamic thought and Western thought apply this axiom and pay attention to it?

Maybe the word “objective research” is a quick answer, a well-known and widespread phrase that is commonly associated, amongst some people, with the research of orientalists, so does it answer this question?

It seems that relying on this “objective research” alone to arrive at a judgement is a way to truth that is tumultuous and not scientific. There is no doubt that it causes us to deviate from the truth while at the same time deluding us into thinking that we have actually found it.

It would be good for us to look for the answer to this question by looking at the actual path that is taken by both Muslim and Western scholars to arrive at some truth, whether it is evaluative (as they say) or historical.

We must—before anything else—establish a truth that has importance in this regard, and it is that the primary factor in subjugating Islamic thought to an exact and scientific method of research, as we will see, is nothing other than the religion. If it were not for their religious belief, Muslims would not burden themselves with the difficulty of such a method that requires time and effort and does not bring about any specific material gain, and then ardently cling to it until becomes something normal for all of them, as they encounter it and study it together.

This religious objective is exemplified in many passages in the Book of Allah the Exalted, one of them being His saying, Glorified and Majestic: **“And do not concern yourself with anything that you have no knowledge of. Indeed the ears, the eyes and the hearts will all be brought to account”** [Al-Isrā’ 17:36]. This saying of His, Glorified and Majestic, is a rebuke of people who have plunged their intellects into the obscurities of whims and conjectures which, by their very nature, cover the truth and do not reveal it.

“For most of them follow nothing but conjecture: conjecture can never be a substitute for truth. Verily, Allah has full knowledge of all that they do” [Yūnus 10:36].

You can see how embodied in this motive is the prohibition against adopting any idea, even the religion itself, from being the outcome of anything other than a path established by an intellect that readily accepts definitive proofs that by their nature reveal the truth that is sought.

It is because of this that the scholars of *tawhid* have stipulated as a condition for a believer’s faith that it be based solely on knowledge-

based proof and not suspicious facts resulting from merely following someone else.

This is because scientific truth—in the ruling of the religion⁽¹⁾—is the summit of all intellectually sacred things, as are its sources. It is that which thought must turn to in humility and revolve around. Is there a stronger evidence in this regard than the fact that the religion itself is not satisfied with its existence and its sanctity being based on anything other than knowledge and its proofs, and it is not pleased to take a judge for itself from anywhere else?

All of this means that Islam grants a religious quality to searching for the truth with only the two lights of knowledge and the intellect. If a non-Muslim, by his nature, engages in this because of his love for research, then indeed the Muslim is motivated to do research because he feels that it is an obligation that he is rewarded for doing and punished for not doing.

And this is how Islamic thought found itself in front of a religious duty, and it is the necessity of searching for the truth, whether it is by way of transmission or by way of claims. It is self-evident that fulfilling this duty will require the laying down of a method of research. It is obvious that as long as the objective is sound and intact and only the intellect can judge regarding it, the method of attaining the objective will also be sound and intact, being governed only by the intellect.

But despite that we are not writing this study so that we can rush and make a judgement that the scientific method that the Muslims have is sound and intact and is only governed by the intellect. Our only intention is to study this method and we will make a decision regarding it afterwards.

(1) What we mean by ‘religion’ here is specifically Islam, and it is known that there are massive differences between Islam and other religions in this regard.

The Method of Research according to Muslim Scholars:

The scientific method of research according to Muslim scholars can be summarized in the great and glorious maxim that no-one else has anything that compares to it, and it is their statement:

If you are transmitting then [you need to] authenticate it, and if you are claiming [something then you need] evidence.

This means that the topic of research must either be a piece of information that has been transmitted or a claim that has been made. As for that which may be a transmitted piece of information, research into it must be restricted to verifying the relationship between it and its source. Otherwise the door is open for speculation, confusion and doubt. If speculation is eliminated and the veil is lifted then the result of the transmitted information is a specific scientific truth, on the condition that it possesses decisive evidence.

As for that which is merely a claim, research into it must be directed towards scientific evidences that agree with it and which by their nature will reveal the extent to which this claim is true.

For every type of claim there is a type of scientific evidence that suits it and cannot be substituted for anything else. Claims that are related to the nature of material things and their essence can only be connected to scientific proofs that are tangible and experiential. Claims that are connected to things like logic and numbers can only be accepted alongside established and sound proofs. Claims that are connected to civil rights and affairs can only be of benefit if they are accompanied by clear proofs upon which there is agreement that they are necessarily applicable. In this way a claim does not become an established scientific truth unless it is presented with the appropriate evidence. Evidence that may back up the claim does not have any scientific value unless there is conformity between them in terms of nature and type.

Bearing that in mind, what, then, is the scientific method that the scholars of Islam have laid down in order to verify the relationship between the piece of information and its source and to verify the scientific value of a claim according to what we have just mentioned?

The path that is taken to verify a piece of information:

In this path a number of specific techniques have emerged that cannot be found in history outside of the Islamic library, and they are: *ḥadīth* terminology (*muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*), authentication and classification (*al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*) and the biographies of men (*tarājum al-rijāl*), and these three techniques intersect in order to lay down an exact standard for distinguishing a true piece of information from what is otherwise, and the difference between a rigorously authentic piece of information that brings about conjecture and that which brings about certainty.

A piece of information reaches the level of rigorously authentic (*ṣiḥah*) when it is firmly established, by way of exact analysis and research, that the chain of transmission is joined from the one who carries the piece of information all the way back to its source, and this transmission is accurate and just throughout such that there is no anomaly in its content and no defect in its narration. If the piece of information does not reach this level, because a ring in the chain of transmission is missing because we do not know who he is, or there is lack of confidence in his uprightness, or a lack of certainty regarding his memorisation and his precision, or the actual text that is being transmitted does not agree with what has been generally accepted, then it is not rigorously authentic.

But the rigorously authentic, in and of itself, has ascending levels, starting from strong probability to certain realization. If the chain of transmission that carries all the essentials of rigorous authenticity

is comprised of single narrators who transmitted the information between themselves, then it is inevitable that it will be conjectural information according to the intellect. If the rings in the chain of transmission are comprised of two or three narrators then it is still conjectural information but it is stronger than the first example while remaining less than certain.

If each chain becomes chains, i.e. groups of narrators, then the intellect is satisfied that no lie has been made, and at that point the narrated information acquires the attribute of certainty, and it is what is called mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*) information⁽¹⁾.

As for rigorously authentic information that is conjectural, the Islamic ruling does not consider it in matters of creed, because conjecture is of no benefit in this matter. The Qur'ān has prohibited (in the field of studying creed) the following of conjecture. This is as you have seen. However, it is considered in the scope of practical laws, to affirm mass-transmitted information and decisive evidence based on the fact that the Muslim—with regards to scientific conduct—is legally obligated to depend on the rigorously authentic that is conjectural. This is because it is valid for legal rulings to be based on rigorously authentic *aḥādīth* even if they are from a single chain of transmission (*āḥād*), and this is caution and prudence in the matter.

As for the rigorously authentic that is certain, what is called mass-transmitted information, it alone is what is considered when establishing the creed and indisputable established concepts. This means that man is not obliged to believe in something transmitted unless it is based on mass-transmitted proof. If the evidence is from a single chain of transmission then certainty in it depends on one's own personal satisfaction and contentment.

You may ask me: How does the researcher know the conditions for a piece of information to be rigorously authentic? We have made

(1) (tn): i.e. it impossible that all of these people could have conspired to lie.

it obligatory that he hears the chain of transmission, but how can he know about the contact that these narrators had with one another when they are all reliable, trustworthy and precise?

The answer: indeed both sciences of authentication and classification and the biographies of men have facilitated the path of this study and made easy the examination of the position that should be adopted.

In our Islamic library, there are several works that present details about the men whose names are found in any of the chains of transmission that we have. You can stop and look at the biography of whomever you wish in order to classify and authenticate him and determine the age in which he lived, and thereby you will know his contemporaries whom he may have come into contact with. What is strange is that those imams who concentrated on the gathering of the biographies of men—and they are trustworthy imams, and each one of them is considered to be an authority in this regard—were not worried, whilst looking for the truth and respecting the scientific standard, that any corruption would tarnish it, such that they put the points on their letters to provide a very exact description of each person regardless of whether they would conclude that such a person was unreliable and to be avoided or he was to be trusted and relied upon.

And so forth, for in our Islamic library there are dictionaries of a different kind that have been compiled... dictionaries that accurately describe individuals and men; from then you can learn about what is false and not connected to the subject with the same ease that allows you to learn the accurate definition of a word and its explanation in the known dictionaries and lexicons of language.

As we have in our library a specific discipline that has been compiled in this regard, and it is what is called the discipline of ḥadīth terminology, and this technique includes all the various essentials for

substantiating transmissions and pieces of information in accordance with a unique scientific method.

This is a brief summary of the scientific path that the scholars of Islam possess for substantiating transmissions and pieces of information, and there is no desire in these brief words to go into further detail and explanation, but whoever wishes to go further must apply himself to the techniques that we have pointed to in order to find the amazing, inimitable effort that was expended for the sake of extracting the scientific value from the transmitted "word".

The path taken in order to substantiate claims:

This path differs, as we have said, according to how claims differ, and thus that which is connected to some material existence is dealt with by way of analysis and modification. It is inevitable that one rely on evidences and proofs from the five senses, i.e. on that which is called in modern parlance "experience and observation". Therefore, it is the natural means of arriving at certainty in these kinds of matters.

Islam does not hesitate to adopt anything that has been definitely established by this means.

As for the opposite side, indeed science cannot present to us, even today, any scientific reality that contravenes any particular of Islamic theology.

Furthermore, nothing in the Book or the Sunnah has made us legally responsible for any clear, specific information connected to the material things in existence around us. Rather, the Book and the Sunnah have given us expressions that indicate them and prompt us to think about them and reflect on them, more so than giving us information about them, and this is by relying on the means and apparatuses that Allah has provided man with and which are the natural tool for removing the veil of ignorance from every material reality in existence.

This is the secret behind the Qur'ān----- not going into great detail with regards to the scientific laws that are connected to that which is tangible and observable. If the Qur'ān had done that, it would have thus become obligatory upon people to believe in these details, and that in turn would have burdened human minds with having to adopt scientific realities without arriving at them by way of the proofs that are harmonious with them, i.e. experience and observation. The Qur'ān has not burdened anyone with this task, and this is in order to honour the intellect and give it the freedom to use its natural method of unveiling tangible realities.

This is why, in these matters, you find the Qur'ān doing no more than pushing those endowed with intellect towards exploring and investigating by using their scientific, unveiling means. As for what it contains by way of information about the unseen, it has undoubtedly gone into great detail, because there is absolutely no way for experience and observation to arrive at that information. The only way to arrive at certainty in these matters is through Allah's Book, Mighty and Majestic is He, or the mass-transmitted Sunnah.

This is the case for claims that are connected to tangible matters.

As for claims that are connected to the unseen and are not subject to any of the outward senses, there is that which you find in the Book or the mass-transmitted Sunnah by way of a clear text and there is that for which you do not find in either of them any clear account.

As for that which is found in clear texts, this comes within the scope of indisputable established concepts.

The path of certainty is either by way of the transmission of the Book or the transmission of the Sunnah, going back to the certainty of a mass-transmitted piece of information, which we have already discussed. Thus, the Qur'ān is the words that were revealed to Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and they have come to us by way of mass transmission. Thus, there is

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absolutely no doubt that its words are Qur'ānic, and like the Qur'ān the same goes for the Sunnah if it has reached us by way of mass-transmission.

As for the veracity of what the Qur'ān itself contains, regardless of whether it is Qur'ān and has reached us from the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, with certainty, that is another scientific matter that falls under the second category of claims connected to abstract issues or unseen matters. Know that the underlying cause of that goes back to verifying the phenomenon of revelation in the lifetime of the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and verifying the matter therein, which is based on proofs of certainty that rely on full examination and clear necessity, as we will show later in our study.

In other words, the decisive and established texts in the Book give us certainty regarding their contents, and this is after passing two stages of investigation: the first stage is verifying the chain of transmission of the Qur'ān from our master Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, to us. The second stage is verifying his, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, informing that the Qur'ān is from Allah.

If the second stage is verified in light of the principles that we shall mention shortly, then the texts of the Book become a source of permanent certainty. This is the meaning of what we said before: (As for that which is found in clear texts, this comes within the scope of indisputable established concepts).

After that there is no difference between the intellect having a means of digesting and understanding these unseen matters in its own way and not having those means, just like those unseen matters that we only know about because we have been veraciously informed of them, such as the establishment of the Hour, the gathering of the bodies, and the existence of Paradise, the Fire and the Angels. It is

sufficient for these things to be realised with certainty by the fact that they have been informed of and dealt with by a clear text from the Book of Allah or a mass-transmitted ḥadīth from the Sunnah.

Despite the nature of the Qur'ān in this regard, it still presses us to reflect and investigate everything that it informs us of and have certainty in it, namely those unseen matters that the human intellect can go around and sense the reality thereof, such as the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, the occurrence of that which is possible⁽¹⁾, certain things being made the means for other things⁽²⁾, and similar matters.

The scholars of scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalām*) have gone deep into researching these matters by way of merely the intellect and speculation, without placing veracious information as an intermediary between them on the one hand and the intellect and speculation on the other. They have not done so because it is the only means but rather for the sake of opening another path of research towards certainty alongside the path of veracious information.

Thus, Islamic thought arrives at faith in Allah's existence and His oneness, along with that which follows from it, by travelling along two paths, both of which are an exact and scientific method without any defect:

The first path begins with the stage of researching the phenomenon of revelation, and once that has been passed, one moves on to the stage of researching the veracity of what has been transmitted and the essentials of certainty being abundantly present therein. Once that has been passed, one can be certain of the matter and its veracity because of the veracity of its preliminary matters.

As for the second path, it is shorter. One researches the matter based on guidance from nothing but thinking and rational proofs,

(1) (tn): e.g. floods, storms etc.

(2) (tn): e.g. rain being the means of crops growing, etc.

without moving too far away from prophecy and its reality and the Qur'ān and its veracity.

In the end, both paths lead the researcher to the truth. Indeed, they eventually meet and strengthen one another.

As for that which is not mentioned by a certain, mass-transmitted piece of information, without any clear or obvious text, then the means of knowing the truth therein are restricted to rational investigation alone, which is realised by way of two paths:

The First Path: To follow what is called *dalālat al-iltizām*⁽¹⁾

This means to find a direct connection between two things, such that when you think about one of them you imagine the other.

This can only be done after thorough examination, which is to study all the various states and circumstances in which these two things exist, and thus one finds that they are always connected to each other.

For example, if someone's body has considerably weakened it is assumed⁽²⁾ that they are ill. If a town has a minaret it is assumed that its people are Muslims. The sound of the siren that is specific to fire trucks makes one assume that there is a fire. If a man is seen in the street in a drunken state it is assumed that he drank some intoxicant.

The indicator in all of these examples is not the cause of what is being indicated, such that we can say that the fact of something indicating something else is one thing causing the other. Therefore, having a weak body is not the cause of the illness. A minaret is not the cause of people in a town being Muslim. Hearing a siren is not the cause of a fire, and a man being in a drunken state is not a cause of him having drunk an intoxicant.

(1) (tn): i.e. circumstantial evidence.

(2) (tn): or it is an indication.

While you may witness the indicator in each of these examples, you do not see or witness that which is being indicated, such that you can say that the proof is seeing and observation. Rather, it is something hidden from your observation and your perception.

Therefore, how do these things indicate what they indicate, and how can we believe in them without seeing them?

Indeed the way of the indicator is known because the indicator is always connected to that which it indicates, and this is repeated continuously and is proven by examination. Thus, out of this permanent association, an effective link of indication is formed between them.

The way to benefit from this proof is to reflect on some phenomenon that you witness in front of you. If you see—by way of examination—that this phenomenon necessitates a specific reality, then it is natural, in the balance of the intellect, to believe in it, even though you do not find it appearing in front of you. Indeed a person who sees an ambulance racing with an unceasing siren will not doubt that there is a sick person who is suffering in a life-threatening situation, even though he cannot see him. Indeed, perhaps he is not aware of the reality of the ambulance passing in front of him to the extent that he would be aware of the state of the patient, which rapidly comes to mind.

When one of them presents a claim to you, very often you are able, with the means of circumstantial evidence, to determine whether it is true or false. That is done by way of looking for the necessary consequences of this claim. If you see these necessary consequences in front of you then that is proof of the veracity of the claim. If they are not there or it is the opposite, then that is proof of the falsehood of the claim.

Thus, if a man who lives in the suburbs of a town tells you that all its inhabitants are Muslims, it is not possible for you to believe what

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Thus, if a man who lives in the suburbs of a town tells you that all its inhabitants are Muslims, it is not possible for you to believe what

he is saying if you contemplate and find nothing above its buildings but crosses on churches, despite the fact that you have not met any of its people and you have not discovered what their theology or religion is by way of experience and observation. If someone claims to you that the source of thought and intellect in man is his feeling the need for food, you cannot believe his claim if you reflect on all other animals that share with man the feeling of needing food but do not, as a result, possess thought and intellect.

The Types of Circumstantial Evidence:

Circumstantial evidence does not always lead to certainty, as the matter is dependent on how clear the connection is between the two things and to what extent further proof is needed. This is why the scholars have divided circumstantial evidence into three types, ascending in strength from the lowest to the highest:

The first is called *al-luzūm ghayr al-bayyin*⁽¹⁾, which is to state definitively that there is a connection in the matter based on an additional proof, such as the evidence for the corners of a triangle having at least two angles. The intellect does not automatically come to this conclusion for every triangle unless it has come across another proof that affirms it, such as imagining a circle and knowing its degrees. Thus, this evidence alone is not considered a proof because it, in and of itself, needs other proofs and evidence to indicate it. However, it is considered partial proof, which is completed by being supplemented with other proofs.

The second is called *al-luzūm al-bayyin bil-ma'nā al-'amm*⁽²⁾, which is to realise the connection between two things by imagining both of them and investigating the matter for a long time, such as the evidence for something being merely possible based on the fact

(1) (tn): i.e. an unclear connection.

(2) (tn): i.e. a clear connection in the general sense.

that it is *ḥādith*⁽¹⁾, or Allah existing by necessity based on the fact that He is *qadīm*⁽²⁾. Indeed, you would not understand the connection between things that are possible and the attribute of temporary existence unless you had carefully studied the meaning of possibility⁽³⁾ and realised that it is anything that is not impossible for the intellect to imagine not existing, and it has been preferred to and preferred to be contingent. Then you will have carefully studied the meaning of temporary existence and imagined the connection between it and everything that is possible, which, by definition, exists because of something else affecting it.

However, in any case, you still need to imagine another proof (as is the case with an unclear connection) in order to establish this connection.

The third is *al-luzūm al-bayyin bil-ma'nā al-khāṣ*⁽⁴⁾, which means that imagining the connection alone is sufficient for imagining the connection and making an apodictic judgment, such as the ambulance indicating the patient in the previous example, or groaning in pain indicating an illness in natural cases, or an utterance coming from someone in the dark indicating the presence of a living being in rational cases. Indeed, the strength of the connection between each of these matters makes the intellect imagine the illness by merely imagining the groaning, and imagine the living being by merely hearing the utterance coming from the dark without needing to reflect on the connection between the two.

This third type is the strongest of them in terms of indicating and in terms of the strength of the proof, followed by the second type. As for the third type, it is an unclear connection and cannot be

(1) (tn): i.e. existing only temporarily as opposed to eternally.

(2) (tn): i.e. pre-eternal.

(3) (tn): Ar. *Imkān*.

(4) (tn): i.e. a clear connection in a specific sense.

considered as independent proof. Rather, it can only be considered proof when there is an additional proof that reveals the veracity of the connection, as we have mentioned.

The Second Path: Analogy (*qiyās*):

What is meant here is not the logical analogy that is adopted from Greek philosophy, which is based on propositions and perceptual forms, but rather the meaning of analogy according to the scholars of *uṣūl al-fiqh*⁽¹⁾ and the scholars of *uṣūl al-dīn (al-mutakallimīn)*⁽²⁾ after they took inspiration from the Book of Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

This is a method that can be summarised as extracting a cause (*illah*) for something or its reason (*sabab*), then to look for what might resemble it from amongst unknown matters until the researcher is certain that both the known and the unknown share one cause, and thus an analogy is made from the former and its ruling that is taken from the effect of that cause is applied to the latter.

The concept of analogy is based on two principles, both of which are intellectually accepted truths that require no proof.

The first principle is the law of causation, i.e. everything caused has a cause and every effect has something that influenced it.

The second principle is the law of harmony and order in the world, i.e. the minor, partial manifestations of the universe, even though they are of different shapes, are connected by comprehensive reasons which by their nature establish harmony and symmetry between all of them, and no matter how closely you examine the natures of these reasons you will see, eventually, that they are combined in the smallest number of causes and reasons.

Analogy is only based on these two principles, as well, by means of investigation (*istiqrāʾ*) as it is that which informs the researcher

(1) (tn): i.e. jurisprudence.

(2) (tn): i.e. the scholars of theology and especially *kalām*, or dialectical theology.

of the reality of the reason. Then it is that which, by means of itself, realises the established, comprehensive relationships between things that are outwardly dispersed or different, and this is how we notice that thorough investigation is an indispensable condition for the two proofs: circumstantial and analogy.

The method of investigation here is that you follow the particulars of what you claim is the reason behind a specific matter, and that you find that it is not separate from the production of what it causes.

This is done by contemplating the relationship between the cause and the thing caused, for you will see therein the phenomenon of conformity and reflection, i.e. every time the cause is found the thing caused is found, and every time the cause is absent the thing caused is absent. Then you look further into the cause and you find that it influences the caused thing with indisputable proof, as this conformity or reflection between the two could merely be due to coincidence or some other factor.

This is how you know that the condition of analogy here (i.e. in building one's theology and indisputable matters) is that the cause influence the thing caused⁽¹⁾, that it conforms and reflects and that it clearly does not change with time or place.

If the cause does not meet the level of this condition, such as the influence therein not being obvious and there only being some apparent agreement with the thing causes, then this is a presumptive analogy (*qiyās ḥannī*), which is not accepted in theological or intellectual judgments. It can only be accepted in practical, legal

(1) What we mean by influence is that that causation between the cause and the thing caused is established by proof, such as rain causing vegetation and fire causing burning, irrespective of researching the reality of this causation and analysing it in the light of faith in the Real Causer (*al-Musabbib al-Ḥaqqī*), Mighty and Majestic, and the place for research is in analysing that, and discussing the law of causation in the universe, while I will return to in its proper place in this book.

issues. To establish the decisive evidence that presumptive evidences suffice for worship and rulings of the Revealed Law, as we have mentioned above, it suffices in the analogy of practical rulings of the Revealed Law that the cause not change with time or place and that it conform and reflect, but it is not stipulated that it influence. Rather, it is sufficient for there to be agreement in the personal reasoning (*ijtihad*) of the researcher in order to build the ruling on top of it. Thus, analogy in practical legalities of the Revealed Law actually differs greatly from the nature of analogy and its conditions in theological matters.

An example of this would be to see houses or tents from afar in which people live, for that would make you certain of the existence of water in that place.

The path to certainty therein is that you would call to mind, by quickly glancing at every other place you know in which people live, and see that one of the most important reasons behind a place being suitable for people to inhabit it is the availability of water. This notion does not change under any circumstances, as you notice the influence of the cause (*sabab*), which is the water, upon the thing caused, which is subsistence and the feasibility of life.

At that point, you can draw an analogous conclusion from those other places and apply it to this place that appears before you at a distance and decisively affirm the existence of water therein even though you have not seen it with your own eyes.

If this same example were reversed, such that you saw a small amount of water from a distance and then understood from that that people were living there, it would be merely conjecture with no possibility of being elevated to the level of certainty.

This is because the causality of water for human life is an established fact based on the evidence of influence, for water must be present wherever people are present. As for the causality of water for the

existence of people around it, this is merely something appropriate and in conformity⁽¹⁾.

Another example of this is everything that possesses the appearance of being made and planned being proof of someone making it and planning it. It is a necessity that the thing caused not be separated from its cause.

From here you know that Muslim scholars only pursue the method of investigation when they come across anything that cannot be subject to experience and observation, and in the shadow of this method they gather together both circumstantial evidence and analogy. As you can see, it is as remote as possibly can be from the metaphysical conclusions and abstract contemplations that Greek philosophy delved into ever so deeply.

Indeed, anyone who reflects on the Islamic method of research knows that the scholars of Islam cannot establish any rational or creedal ruling unless it is upon the foundations of reality, in which all the elements of certainty are gathered.

As for those other realities that remain hidden behind the veil of doubts and have not been grasped except by the hand of speculative deduction, such as those that have emerged in the course of historical studies or discovered relics or ancient fossils—for Islamic history does not know of some fact of certainty that was established upon them or that they were ever adopted as proof of criticism, demonstration (*istidlāl*) or the building of an idea. Rather, they have remained as disconnected research and doubt around which every possibility revolves, and a path that calls for the connecting of the various strands of information using correct, investigative research.

* * *

(1) (tn): in other words, the existence of water in a given location only allows for the possibility of people living there, it does not necessitate such.

This has been a very quick summary of the scientific method of research according to the Muslims. We have taken it from what is found in their researches, not from abstract theories that are contained in their libraries. After that, we want to ask about the method of research according to others, according to the scholars of the West, such as the thinkers and the orientalist, those who have broadcast and spread the word "objectivity" around their researches. Indeed, this is the foundation that pushed us to write this introduction.

There is no doubt that it has been made clear to the reader, by looking at the first section of this discussion, that I am not seeking to studying both methods of research, the Islamic and the Western, in an analytical fashion that would make it subject to an exposition of different schools of thought that may exist therein, or historical phases or a critique of the theories themselves. Rather, what I intend is to clarify two facts.

The first: explain the extent to which Islamic thought relies on the pure objective methods in its researches, and then explain the extent to which Western thought enjoys its share—more or less—of the same.

The second: the extent to which there could be cohesion and concomitance between the methods of research (in that they are specific, intellectual studies and conventions) and between the various scientific methods, according to both Muslims and others, i.e. the extent of the share that these methods possess of reality and correct scientific application.

We—for the sake of elucidating this fact—do not want to derive the scientific method of research according to Muslim scholars from anything apart from that which is found in their own researches, not so that in the end we can merely know that there is an independent discipline in the Islamic library connected to the method of research, but rather with that—and this is what is most important in this discussion—we can know the extent to which this method is applied to the Islamic sciences themselves.

The Method of Research According to Westerners:

We will conclude this discussion of ours by following the same path that we started out on, and thus we ask:

What is the scientific method that Western thought follows in all the various sciences that it comes across?

There is no escape from going back and dividing the subject of science, whatever its type, into two sides: a report that needs to be verified and a claim whose veracity needs to be ascertained.

We will start with the first of them and say:

The method of testing transmissions and reports:

We do not need to exert much thought in reflecting on the answer, for the reality is that the Western method is devoid, until now, of any objective standard for verifying anything connected to narrations and transmissions.

There is what they call the retrieval method (*al-minhaj al-istirdādī*) or the method of anticipation, the first pillar of which is whatever the researcher may possess by way of depth of perception, precision of sentiment (*wijdān*) and broadness of imagination. The tools that the researcher uses, his perception, his sentiment and his imagination, and everything he may come across by way of relics, events and documents; the manner of research is for the researcher to focus on the relics or events that he has gathered in front of him and impose his perception, sentiment and imagination upon them in order to derive on the back of that whatever puts him at ease by way of principles, judgments and factual findings⁽¹⁾.

It is—as you can see—a method that in the end, regardless of how many tools and documents are gathered, only has one path, which is the path of speculative derivation, or indeed purely unseen.

(1) See p.200 and onwards of *Manāhij al-Ba'th al-'Ilmī* by 'Abdur Raḥmān Badawī.

Derivation that is stripped of experience and observation, thorough investigation and true narration is nothing but a synonym for fancy and doubt or weak, unstable conjecture. That is with the exception of relying on historical documents that contain evidence of certainty, in consideration of what is between them and their source by of a relationship of cause and thing caused, or something necessitating and something being necessitated.

Let the researcher ask: what has prevented Western thought, until today, from adopting a scientific method with regards to verifying transmissions, despite that importance of the matter and despite the fact that it constitutes half the distance towards verifying many various scientific issues.

The answer is that being concerned with verifying transmissions and reports demands arduous and strenuous effort for there being, outwardly, any material return. To exert such effort cannot be unless there is a motive behind it that is stronger than the intensity of the effort that is to be exerted.

The motive exists in abundance with Muslim scholars, while not a speck of it exists in others. Muslim scholars believe in the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and in the Prophethood of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and that they are legally responsible for basing their lives upon the way that has been explained to them in Allah's Book and His Messenger's *Sunnah*. Thus, there is no doubt that they are legally responsible for knowing that the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has left behind, by way of teachings and instructions. They must strive to their utmost to ensure that the factual certainty that is attached to his life, his biography and his statements is not mixed with anything that would discredit it, such as guesses, lies and inventions.

This is how their certainty made them arrive at this arduous, accurate method that they have laid down as a standard for the veracity of every narration and date, and it was an obligation upon them not to underestimate the huge burdens they were responsible

for bearing in applying this method. If it were not for this certainty and this motive, you would not have seen a single scholar of ḥadīth travelling hundreds of miles, far from his homeland, in hard, difficult conditions for nothing other than meeting a Shaykh who can narrate a ḥadīth from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The one coming to him may already know it and have memorised it but he wants to take it from him as well and ask his permission to narrate it from him so that he can possess more paths of the ḥadīth and know all the chains of transmission that it has.

It is very easy for you to read the chain of transmission of any ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in a book such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and you are reclining on your couch or sitting behind your desk, but what is important is that the illustration of that amazing effort that was generously expended in order to get just those two lines of a chain of transmission, which is of almost no importance today, is made clear.

This is about the motive that has pushed Muslim scholars to establish a comprehensive method for verifying narrations. What could possibly make this motive push others to do the same? There is absolutely nothing, as long as the effort that should be expended in order to acquire it is far greater than the material gain or even the knowledge that is sought.

At this juncture, you will notice that many scientific subjects have been treated by both Islamic and Western thought by way of inquiry using two differing paths in which discussion and criticism are of no benefit. This is because, for Muslims, the method of verifying narrations is one of the sources of expounding them, while for others the opposite method for doing so is nothing more than deduction.

As an example of this, let us look at the phenomenon of revelation in the life of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The method that Muslim scholars have followed in this matter is the following:

First of all, there is the verification of the narration and accuracy of the wording and the chain of transmission. All Muslim scholars have reached the conclusion that the ḥadīth of revelation is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and has come through so many various paths that it has surpassed the threshold of *mutawātir*⁽¹⁾ *ma'nawī*⁽²⁾.

The second is thorough investigation, which has placed them in front of both circumstantial evidence and analogy of the first⁽³⁾ (and the reader should not wait for me to explain this method that the scholars followed in this regard here, for that will inevitably drag us in another chapter that we are not concerned with right now)⁽⁴⁾.

The conclusion that Islamic thought arrived at was: conviction that revelation is him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, receiving an essential, independent reality that is outside of his being and his internal feelings and far removed from anything he has acquired or his intellectual or scientific demeanour.

As for the method that Westerners have followed regarding the same, it is as follows:

The first step is to take the word "revelation" (*waḥī*) and consider it a relic or vague event that history has left behind.

Secondly, using guesswork and estimation to derive whatever anticipation, sentiment and imagination can comprehend from this word.

After that, the conclusion that they have arrived at with regard to revelation is that they have differed and split up into different

(1) (tn): i.e. it has been transmitted for so many sources such that it would be impossible for all of them to have conspired to lie.

(2) (tn): i.e. in meaning, as opposed to exact wording (*lafẓī*).

(3) (tn): i.e. attaching the second event, which has no textual ruling, to the first event, does have a textual ruling, because the two events are the same in terms of the cause (*'illah*) of the ruling.

(4) In this book, this will be discussed in the section on Prophecy, starting on p.144.

schools. There are those amongst them who have concluded that revelation is nothing more than an internal, mental exercise or type of psychical inspiration. Then there are those who claim that it is a spiritual illumination that has come by way of gradual unveiling. And then there are those who have found nothing wrong in affirming that revelation is nothing more than epileptic fits that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was afflicted with from time to time.

There is no expectation that these people and the thinkers of Islam will come together on one path of understanding this matter, because these people have eliminated from their consideration the matter of narrations and reports and their scientific value, whether negative or positive. In other words, they have deemed it permissible for themselves to ignore authentic, *mutawātir* narrations just as they have, at the same time, deemed it permissible to invent an explanation that is not supported by any report or authentic narration.

Likewise, they absolutely do not adhere to the method of investigation and what is established by the law of circumstantial evidence and analogy of the first. This has allowed them to imagine that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from the moment in which he received revelation, had a personality that completely contradicted the personality he had beforehand, and indeed contradicted the ongoing events of his life. It has allowed them to make him, peace and blessings be upon him, the greatest liar in the sight of Allah after he was by far the most trustworthy and honest of people. They have made him the greatest actor, deceiver and charlatan, who feigned fear and the yellowing of his face in front of Khadījah because of something he had seen of revelation while at the same time he actually did nothing more than apply himself to mere internal thoughts and inspirations.

The method of testing scientific claims:

After the above, let us move to the other side of the scientific topic and ask: what is the scientific method that follows verification with regards to a claim from amongst all other claims or a hypothesis from amongst all other hypotheses that scholars of the West come across?

We say: As for those hypotheses that are connected to the natural sciences, Europe has been able, since the age of the Renaissance, to contrive a method for itself, based on experience and observation, that possesses in abundance all the elements of perplexity and precision, and it is not just this. Rather, European thought has been able to use the tales of unveilings and invention as a means of supporting scientific experience, backing it up and benefitting immensely from it⁽¹⁾.

(1) The experiential [(tn): or experimental] method can only be relied on in the natural sciences, since it is from the very nature of these sciences that they cannot be grasped with certainty unless it is by way of beginning with subject matters that are found in external experience and are far removed from inspiration of the mind or cogitation. Then they impose themselves upon it according to what observation and experience indicate, and after that the duty of the mind is merely to expound upon it and analyse it.

Furthermore, some imbeciles, who have not realised that there are differences in the natures of the various sciences, persist—relying on the experiential method—in not having faith in the Creator, Mighty and Majestic, as long as that cannot be established by the experiential method. These miserable people are under the delusion that when Europe got trains moving due to its natural sciences and got electricity working and launched rockets using experiential studies, this proved that all universal realities should be transformed into natural sciences and thus be subjected to experience and observation, and if not then the ruling of a judge in the court cannot be accepted, nor can a law in psychology. These people have no readiness to imagine any reality that is from the events of the past or the apprehensions of the future, because all of that is nothing more than the fruits of investigation or inference or analogy. As long as all of that is far removed from experience and observation then it is nonsense. It has no existence.

There is no doubt that this kind of thinking is in greater need of discussion and negotiation.

There is no benefit in you saying, as some are pleased to do so, that Europe only inherited this method from us, we the Muslim, during the Middle Ages and its well-known historical events. Therefore, the reality is that Europe, to the extent that it is rich today with this inheritance, we are thoroughly impoverished in terms of the glory we once had in days gone by...and therefore we must, as Arabs, or Muslims, open our eyes properly and look at the clear reality, which is:

History, always, only belongs to the time period in which it was born. It does not bequeath glory or decline but only bequeaths one thing, which is the lesson.

However, Europe, to the extent that it has developed in the field of natural sciences and its methods, has gone backwards in the field of other indisputable, fixed notions, such as that which falls under the category of abstract and unseen matters.

It was incumbent upon their scholars and thinkers, in view of these fixed notions, to travel one of two paths:

Either firmly closing the door of research and reflection between themselves and these matters and regarding what they have acquired from the other, material sciences as freeing them of the need to spend any intellectual effort in anything besides them:

Or approach them with a method of objectivity and pure scientific examination, as they cannot turn away from them.

However, the reality is that they did not do this or that but rather they were happy to adopt a method of studying them and researching them that could, in the very least, be described as strange and curious.

They started their research with the premise of whatever theories and postulates in their minds pleased them; everything was according to what was appealing and according to the inspiration of the environment, the society and the study in whose shadow they grew up in. Then they were pleased to extract suitable, inferred evidences for what they had already presumed and relied upon just as they were pleased, as an

equivalent, to declare false the evidences that defy what they rely upon, with no motive other than the desire to do so.

In order not to wrong the minority of researchers who have turned away from their desires and allowed their thoughts to receive a portion of free, pure research, we should say that this description applies to the mentality that is found in the majority of Western thinkers, and in the majority of scientific issues that have the same, abovementioned imprint.

There is no doubt that one of the clearest repercussions of this reality and most obvious of its illustrated indications is those schools of thought that have emerged claiming that theology can follow psychical desire and be subject to it.

Thus, it suffices you, in order for you to believe in something with firm conviction, that your desire direct itself towards that and that you feel the need for it. At the same time, your desire or your need will not be able to extract the evidence for you that follows the other according to what you prefer to believe in.

At the forefront of those who have adopted this method and means of research is the famous American thinker William James and his famous book *Pragmatism* is one of the most important sources which explain this method and advocate it.

The strangest manifestation of this method, which has attracted a large group of Western researchers, materialises as James divides the necessary intellectual tendencies into two: living and dead, and he explains the dead tendency as being that which the researcher has no inclination towards, and he strikes an example of this tendency: if it is said to someone, 'Be a Sufi', or 'Be a Muslim', as opposed to being told, 'Be a Christian' or 'Be an agnostic'; the first half of the research has already been judged as false because the tendency towards it is absent and the desire is to turn away from it⁽¹⁾.

(1) See *The Will to Believe* by William James [(tn):

<http://educ.jmu.edu/~omearawm/ph101willtobelieve.html>, accessed 7 June, 2016.

There is no doubt that this method, which is advocated by others besides William James, has been opposed (from the theoretical standpoint) by several others. However, the factual evidences of the various researches articulates, even with regards to these opponents, the very same method and it calls out with a raised voice that theology, whether positive or negative, must be based on a large portion of mere desire, if we do not say desire alone. This means that it is folly for you to look for any semblance of objectivity in their researches, except for a rare minority from amongst them, and especially because the path of inference—which is the sole path for their verifications in this domain—is extremely malleable as it responds to every desire and tendency.

What James and other Western thinkers have in common is that they create the fabric of religious belief in their thoughts from the fibres of the various worldly interests that exist, which people long for in their lives and livelihoods. There is no doubt that it is not their religious doctrines that emanate from their thoughts and intellects and into their lives but the other way around: they emanate from the actuality of their lives and daily affairs and into their thoughts and intellects.

Look at how the British thinker Bentham illustrates this method with the clearest illustration. He says,

'Religion must be in accordance with what benefit requires. The influence that religion has is based on punishment and reward, and thus its punishment must be directed at those actions that only harm the social condition, while its reward should be restricted to actions that benefit. The only way for governance to be in accordance with religion is to look at it from the angle of political good for the nation only. Anything besides that should not be looked at'⁽¹⁾.

(1) (tn): This is most likely paraphrased from *An Introduction to The Principles and Morals of Legislation* by Jeremy Bentham. Please see <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/bentham-an-introduction-to-the-principles-of-morals-and-legislation> (accessed 7 June, 2016).

When they found that the nature of the intellect differs completely from this method in research and examination, and they saw that abandoning the intellect's bridle, letting it think about unseen and abstract matters as it wants, would lead to many of their intellectual principles and rules, which they had established upon this method, falling into ruin, they could not be bothered to establish another intellectual school based on scorning the intellect and denying its proofs and evidences, and warn one another about the dangers of the intellect to religion (i.e. to the religion that they understand according to their method that we have clarified) using the slogan: 'Saving Religion from the Intellect'.

You know that the course of this strange path, just as it requires from them not to look at the pure intellect, for the sake of conscripting general intellectual values behind the various interests and benefits that they had agreed upon, also requires the denial of every other understanding of these values and doctrines that does not agree with their interests, regardless of their connection to the intellect and regardless of how self-evident and obvious they are.

Because of this you find them—at a time in which they are shackling their intellects for fear of the dangers they would pose to the doctrines they have established in compliance with certain circumstances in their lives—swooping down and attacking our doctrines, which have been established, as you have seen, in compliance with the rule of the pure intellect in accordance with its sound scientific method: and that is by their claim, in which they know are lying, of free thinking and intellect and not being guided except by science! In other words, this attack is masked in the mask of rational, free research yet it is nothing but in compliance with the same method that they have adhered to, which is that any doctrine that does not agree with their various interests, inclinations and hopes deserves to be fought again, regardless of its proofs and sources.

By my reckoning, all I am obliged to do is place before the reader several examples most of which share in affirming two specific matters: the path of pure inference that is free of any checking or investigation, and the effect of the desire to defend against a specific trend and build one's theology on its foundations.

Von Kramer and Goldziher relate that people researched a strange matter, which was: do non-Arab men marry Arab women in Paradise? This was because of their desire to establish that the Islamic Conquests bore the hidden objective of Arab dominance⁽¹⁾.

There is no doubt that whoever reads this text will imagine that a great mass of people researched this topic and that those who researched it were jurists (*fuqahā'*) as it is something that concerns jurists before anyone else.

However, if you go back to the source of the story and its chain of transmission and reality you will know that the "people" who looked into the topic of non-Arabs marrying Arab women in Paradise were actually one Bedouin who had come from the desert. Al-Aṣma'ī heard him saying to someone else, 'Do you think these non-Arabs will marry our women in Paradise?' He replied, 'I think so, and righteous action is by Allah.' It is a story that has been related by al-Mubrad in *al-Kāmil* and he declares its certainty weak⁽²⁾.

So contemplate on how a report that had been cut off from its source was put forward and presented in a general way, and forced to speak, against its will, and testify to what the pure, scientific, objective researcher wanted!

In the book *The Philosophy of Religious Thought between Islam*

(1) Refer to *La Domination Arabe* by Van Vloten [tn: https://archive.org/details/syada_arabya] and what Kramer and Goldziher have written on the same topic.

(2) Refer to *al-Kāmil* by al-Mubrad, v.2 in the section on clients of the Arabs.

and Christianity by Louis Ghardiah and G. Qanwātī⁽¹⁾, it is mentioned that 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān approached the Qur'ān during his caliphate and divided it into chapters (*sūr*) and verses (*āyāt*) and he arranged the chapters according to length, starting with the longest and then the next longest and so forth. (v.1 p.42).

So contemplate, first of all, on the method followed in order to established this claim or hypothesis and you will know that the method is absent from its foundations. The authors have just put this claim in front of us so that we close our eyes and accept it as it is, forgetting the statement of the poet:

Claims, if you do not establish clear proofs

Upon them, they will give rises to pleas

From what investigative, or demonstrative or inferential, source was it established that 'Uthmān was the one who divided the Qur'ān into chapters and verses, that he deliberately arranged them according to his own desire and that he arranged them starting with the longest of them, knowing that he was the one who decided that this one should be long and this one should be short?

As for us, what we know according to the authentic, established narration of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and from 'Uthmān himself, is that the matter of verses and their arrangement and chapters and their division and arrangement, all of it goes back to *at-tawqīf*,⁽²⁾ which no one, not even the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him

(1) (tn):

http://www.islameyat.com/post_details.php?id=1517&cat=23&scat=151& (accessed on 8 June, 2016) This book was translated into Arabic from a language other than English. The Arabic title is *Falsafah al-Fikr al-Dīnī bayna al-Islām wa al-Masīhiyyah*.

(2) (tn): i.e. they are as Allah has commanded, there is no room for *ijtihād*, or personal reasoning.

peace, has a hand in. Our proof for this is what al-Bukhārī has related with his own chain of transmission on the authority of Ibn Zubayr, who said, 'I said to 'Uthmān, "This verse, **"Those who die leaving wives behind"** until His statement: **"without them having to leave their homes"** [al-Baqarah 2:240] has been abrogated by the other verse, so why do you write it?" He replied, "O my cousin, I do not change anything from its place." And there is what al-Qurṭubī and others have related with an authentic chain of transmission on the authority of Sulaymān ibn Bilāl, who said, 'I heard Rabī'ah being asked, "Why do al-Baqarah and Āl 'Imrān come first when some eighty chapters were revealed before them while both of them were revealed in Madīnah?" Rabī'ah replied, "They come first, and the Qur'ān has only been compiled according to the One Who compiled it"⁽¹⁾.

1- Now you have this example:

The orientalist Gibb, in his work "The Structure of Religious Thought in Islam"⁽²⁾, says that Islam came to give a religious character to that ancient Arab "animism", which had been weaved by the customs and the environment, after Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been unable to get rid of it. And he continued to affirm that—with odd and strange seriousness—using a method that was based on his deep penetration into inference, or indeed pure guesswork in most cases.

But all of the above is of the utmost simplicity compared to what follows:

(1) In this book, *The Philosophy of Religious Thought*, there is a great deal of scum, which both authors used liberally in the inferential path first and in the desire to arrive at a specific conclusion second. Maybe we will get the opportunity, from this scum, to show the thing that increases in exposing the value of "pragmatism" and "objectivity" according to these researchers.

(2) (tn): which is a chapter in his book *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

Gibb says in the introduction to this book of his, '...' Then he quotes his book *Hujjat Allāhi al-Bālighah*. This is the established, literal text, in quotation marks, which I am transmitting to the noble reader:

'Indeed the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sent with a mission that contained a second mission. The first was to the children of Ismā'īl...this mission necessitated that the contents of his Revealed Law be rites and practices of worship and types of usefulness that they were familiar with, as the Revealed Law was only to rectify what they already had, not burden them with something they had absolutely no knowledge of'.

We say: There is no doubt that Gibb did not come across this expression alone in the book without looking at anything that came before it or after it. That would be impossible, as the expression is embedded in a long discussion that surrounds it from all sides. Here we find—unfortunately—the most serious kind of treachery in research and quotation, which is that he deliberately distorted what was being said and made the speaker responsible for what he was not responsible for, and tried to make him say what he was innocent of.

What is amazing is that if we were to go back and look in the books of those who came before us for a comprehensive refutation of Gibb's fantasies which he has put forward in this book of his, we would not find a refutation more profound and more comprehensive than what is found in the book of Shah Walī Allah ad-Dahlawī, in his book *Hujjat Allāhi al-Bālighah*, on the same page from which Gibb plucked out this text in order for it to corroborate what he was saying. It is as if Allah, Mighty and Majestic, inspired him⁽¹⁾ to cut the means of whoever would come after him and load his speech with that which he never intended and make him say what he never could have said. Here is what he said:

(1) (tn): i.e. ad-Dahlawī.

'Know that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sent with the Ismā'īlī Ḥanafīyyah⁽¹⁾ in order to straighten its crookedness, remove its distortions and spread its light. This is the Exalted's statement: **"the religion of your forefather Ibrāhīm"** [al-Ḥajj 22:78] As that was the case, it was necessary for the foundations of that religion to be intact and its practices established. This meant that the Prophet was sent to a people who still had the remnants of rightly guided Sunnah⁽²⁾, and thus there was no point in changing it or altering it. Rather, the obligation was to affirm it because it was more malleable to their souls and a firmer proof against them. The children of Ismā'īl inherited the way of their father Ismā'īl and they were upon that Revealed Law until 'Amr ibn Luḥayy came into existence and inserted things into it according to his corrupt opinion, and thus he went astray and led others astray. He introduced the worship of idols and new, unbound practices. There was the nullification of the religion and the mixing of the correct with the corrupt, and they were overwhelmed by ignorance, idolatry and disbelief. Allah then sent our master, Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to straighten their crookedness and rectify their corruption. He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, looked at their law and whatever corresponded with the way of Ismā'īl, peace be upon him, and the rites of Allah, he commanded that it remain, and whatever was a distortion or corruption or from the rites of idol worship and disbelief, he nullified it and recorded its nullification'⁽³⁾.

One thing that cannot be doubted is that Gibb knew about this text that follows those sentences that we quoted from him, and it

(1) (tn): i.e. rejecting idol-worship and adhering to the true religion.

(2) (tn): i.e. customary practice, and in this context meaning a source of legislation.

(3) See *Hujjat Allāhi al-Bālighah* by ad-Dahlawī (1/97, 98 and 99) and the work "The Structure of Religious Thought in Islam" by the English Orientalist Gibb. (tn): The Arabic translation of Gibb's work, by Dr 'Ādil al-Iwwā, is called *Bunyat al-Fikr al-Dīnī fī al-Islām* (University of Damascus Press, 1959) and the quote is found on p.58.

is, as you can see, nothing but an elaboration and explanation of its contents, as anyone who reflects knows. Thus, how can it be possible to ignore it and pay no attention to it, or indeed not be content with that alone until claiming that in affirming his ideas he was relying on al-Dahlawī, on this man who utterly pulverised these fantasies, as you can see?

Thus, this is the reality of the scientific method that is followed by most Westerners when they enter into a scientific discussion with others, or when they want to establish some hypothesis or fact, or when they try to extract some knowledge or grasp some certainty from a text or document in history: the path of inference first,⁽¹⁾ then subject the research to nothing but will and desire second, then deliberately distort transmissions and text third.

When we know these realities, and some of its many examples, we have no choice but to thank a researcher like ‘Abdur Raḥmān Badawī when he warns us—in immersed, exalted purity—after his discussion on the retrieval method of Westerners against explaining any historical text in other than the language of the age in which it was written, against ignoring the context and what precedes it, and against speculating in understanding an indication or expression according to other than what the context of the entire expression leads to.

However, what is amazing about his statement is that these pieces of advice are directed at Muslim scholars, those to whom the graciousness of drawing attention to this precision and trust goes back to, and to whom goes back the graciousness of applying it in the most comprehensive of ways, without directing any of it at these Westerners whom he is excessively impressed by and speaks at great length about their methods, unfortunate examples of which we have just shown. Instead of doing that, he directed it at Muslim scholars, imagining one of them stealing a Qur’ānic verse or Prophetic ḥadīth

(1) (tn): i.e. draw a conclusion first.

—as they say—in order to support contemporary statements that have no connection to them whatsoever apart from the literal wording.

I was hoping from ‘Abdur Raḥmān Badawī—and he ignored what these people did with their method of research—that he would mention to us one example of a researcher from amongst the Muslim scholars (from amongst those who do not imitate their rulers in following their retrieval and anticipation method) who quoted a text and distorted it, or started deriving significant scientific facts with ropes of inference strengthened by guesswork and estimation.

Thus, it is for you, after fully understanding everything we have mentioned, to be completely amazed at those who call religious facts which Muslim researchers have arrived at by way of their scientific method that we have clarified “dogma” and those who hold them “dogmatists”. Then they look at what the philosophers of the West imagine, and those who have deviated from religion, and call it “science” and call the proponents of this imagining “scientists”! In other words, religion, as Gibb understands it with his non-existent method, which we have seen, is science, and his way of thinking is scientific. As for religion, as understood by Muslim scholars in the accordance with the scientific method that we have illustrated, it is pure dogma, and their way of thinking is just a dogmatic exercise!

Thus, O intelligent reader, be an honest, objective researcher, and call this group of people (whether they are Arabs or non-Arabs, Muslims or non-Muslims) whatever pure, scientific investigation shows them to be.

The chief factor behind the failure of Westerners’ research methods:

And despite that, let me speak to you about the deep reason for this strange phenomenon in these people:

Westerners, in terms of their stance towards the Christian religion, fall into two categories: those who profess it, submit to it and believe

in all of its contents and rulings and those who disavow it, do not submit to it and are not lead to following it and professing it.

As for those amongst them who profess it, they are unable to digest the doctrines of their religion and all of its elements by way of science and the intellect (as the intellect and science clearly defy many of its requirements, reconciliation and interpretation are not possible) but they have also found that their natural, human disposition, urges them to find a religion to adhere to and an object of worship to be subject to, and they have become certain that many moral values have no guarantee of being realised without the guarantee of religion and its control over the soul. Thus, they have come to find themselves between two matters, there is no third in front of them that is true to their environment: either they reject this false religion or they reject sound intellect, but they have preferred the second over the first and rejected sound intellect without rejecting the false religion. Thus, they truly are dogmatists.

As for those amongst them who do not profess it, they have preferred rejecting the false religion over rejecting sound intellect, but they have sufficed with the requirements of sound intellect by denying the religion that they have and interpreting it according to what they imagine and what they think, without looking at the true religion whose principles and rulings in totality both the intellect and science submit to. They have been barred from that by other feelings, and they are the feelings of European, subjective partisanship and the constant fear that the Muslims will return once again to dominating the world, as they were back in the day. Thus, these people have been called secularists.

Then you know that amongst Arabs and Muslims there are individuals whom you consider to be people who articulate, comprehend and speak, but in reality they are nothing but pale

shadows that stretch and move with the movements of Europe, the thoughts of Europe and the philosophy of Europe.

These people are of the opinion that religion in Europe has two explanations, a positive explanation which in reality is purely a dogmatic explanation and a negative explanation which, as they call it over there, is a purely scientific explanation. They brought these two explanations from over there and imposed them on the religion of Islam here, for nothing other than to complete the shadow and have blind imitation reinforced from all sides.

This, then, is the deep reason for this strange phenomenon in these people.

This category of people does not concern us at all after the intelligent, reflective, free person knows, from everything we have clarified in this introduction, that Islam does not mean those religious beliefs that Europe holds in defiance of the intellect, and that Islam, in all its principles and doctrines, stands upon an exact, honest, scientific method that is only drawn by the hand of the intellect alone, without partisanship or desire to believe something or blind imitation and following having any sway.

* * *

2. What Makes Man Need Authentic Theology Regarding the Universe and Life and its Requirements

Some people continue-those who have not been prepared with enough Islamic education-to ask: what is the need or necessity that makes us worship Allah (presuming that He exists) with this religion and enjoins upon us everything it contains; its theology, its worship and its rulings? Why does not this god just leave his slaves free to establish their lives however they want and arrange them according to the manner or path that they like? Some of them have stretched this out into a series of questions and asked in exasperation and astonishment: why does Allah need me to confine myself to worshipping Him my whole life? What would diminish Him or harm Him if I did not do so?⁽¹⁾

First of all, there must be a thorough, satisfactory answer to this question, and before delving into any discussion about Islamic theology. We will not prepare minds and intellects to receive the facts of monotheism (*tawhīd*) and the doctrinal elements of this religion as long as the vision in front of them is not described, and the path leading to them has been cleared of all suspicions, obstacles and impediments.

- (1) We would prefer, from a methodological perspective, that questions like this that branch out from denying the existence of the Divine Essence not be answered, as it is impossible to satisfy the questioner with any answer as long as the foundation of the question is established in his mind. Rather, the obligation is to disregard the question and go back to the foundation of the subject, which is studying the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Despite that, I wanted to present the answer to this question at the forefront of our forthcoming discussions in order to enlighten the mind of the believing researcher, not to satisfy the thoughts of the wrangling atheist.

In answering this, we say the following:

Indeed when Allah, Mighty and Majestic, attached His Will to the creation of this Universe, with all the very types and species of existence, His brilliant wisdom necessitated that He choose one type from amongst these created beings (which is man) and make him the master of this Universe and make the rest of its phenomena and created beings subject to him and at his service, and to make him responsible for building it up and organising it. This is what is meant by *khalīfah* in His statement: **"I am putting a vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on the earth"** [al-Baqarah 2:30] and it is what is meant by inhabiting in His statement: **"He brought you into being from the earth and made you its inhabitants"** [Hūd 11:61].

Man is equipped with the most important attributes and abilities:

He equipped this creature with all the abilities and attributes that he would need so that he would be perfectly capable of wanting any matter in this universe, building it and using it. Thus, He placed in him the attribute of intellect and everything that branches out from it, such as knowledge, comprehension and the ability to analyse things, probe their depths and arrive at what is behind them. He has also placed in him the sense of selfishness and everything that branches out from it, such as inclining towards preferring oneself and towards domination. He has placed in him the means of strength and the elements of planning and everything that branches out from them, such as desiring supremacy, exaltedness and rank. Then He placed in him all the feelings, cravings and emotions that are considered to be the completion of the value of these attributes and their benefits, such as love, hate, anger and so forth.

You know very well that man would not be able to subjugate anything in this universe or have mastery over any of the affairs of

life and its phenomena if Allah the Exalted had not equipped him with these abilities and attributes.

However, these attributes carry a great evil and they have immense banes. They are two-edged swords. If one edge is used, it brings sublime order to the universe and abundant goodness to man. If the other edge is used, or they are used together, they bring calamitous evil and dreadful chaos, and humanity inherits endless misery.

This is why Allah has called these weapons that He has entrusted these creatures with 'the Trust', and He clarified the extent of their importance and the sublimity of their affair in His statement: **"We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains but they refused to take it on and shrank from it. But man took it on. He is indeed wrongdoing and ignorant"** [al-Aḥzāb 33:72]⁽¹⁾.

The source of the importance of these attributes is that in reality they are nothing other than attributes of Lordship, for knowledge, power, dominion, domination, might—all of them are elements of Divinity and attributes of the Lord, Mighty and Majestic. It is from the very nature of these attributes that if they are found in man they will intoxicate him, take his mind, make him forget his reality and make him strut to the level of Lordship and Divinity, even though, in reality, the only thing man possesses of them is shadows and traces. The only thing they have in common with the actual divine attributes is the names.

One of the consequences of the importance that is in these attributes, is that by their nature they will induce the one who possesses them to use the attribute of strength to oppress others, to satiate his inclination towards power and dominion by extending his influence and power over oppressed groups, and his inclination towards domination will direct him towards the property of others, such that he will extort it

(1) One of those who have explained 'the Trust' in this verse in such a way is al-'Alāmah al-Khanjawānī in his tafsīr *al-Fawātiḥ al-Ilāhiyyah*.

and act wickedly towards it. Then one of the consequences is that groups of people, pushed by these attributes, will compete in bloody conflicts for power, glory, possession, rule and leadership, and the continuous events of history clearly demonstrate this.

This is how the attributes are turned into a factor of chaos and misery in the life of man; when they were only placed in him in order to be a factor of felicity, progress and order.

On account of this, there had to be another power that would direct these attributes towards righteousness and prevent man from using their weapons unless it was from their beneficial edge, so what could this power be that would control the bridle of all these abilities and attributes and push them towards the path of righteousness alone?

The True Religion is the harness that protects man from the seriousness of these attributes:

That is the need of all humanity for religion, i.e. for the authentic creed regarding man, the universe, life and everything beyond that.

The authentic creed is what the intellect and science lead to, faith in the existence of Allah and His oneness, and that there is no true dominion in the universe apart from His dominion, there is no irresistible force other than His force, there is no kingdom apart from His kingdom, and everything beyond that is created by Allah, Mighty and Majestic; He grants it whenever He wants and He takes it away whenever He wants. He is the One looking over all His slaves. He will resurrect them after death in order to reckon each one of them according to the good and evil that he earned. Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.

If man reflects on all of this and believes in it firmly based on the foundations of free, reflective, rational investigation, he will feel within the depths of his entire being that he is a slave to this One,

Sublime God. Furthermore, these serious and important attributes that he enjoys will come to be within the limits of his slavehood. They will be transformed and become a sublime means of his felicity as an individual and the felicity of his species as a group. There will be a fraternal bond between people and equality in slavehood to Allah after there had been dishonourable rivalries and competitions in which powers came into conflict, swords clashed and the weak were sacrificed for the impetuosity of the strong and the intoxication of their madness.

That is when the inclination for domination in man will become a natural means of establishing a just, comfortable life in which there is civilisation and verdant gardens and meadows everywhere, and treasures will be in abundance in its remote areas. The inclination for power and force will become a means of protecting rights, preserving justice and defending virtue. The inclination towards knowledge and understanding will become a radiant light with which more services of the universe will be unveiled. It will be a guiding firebrand, constantly confirming for man the existence of the Divine Essence and constantly warning him against forgetting the bounds of his slavehood and thus transgressing them into any disbelief or tyranny.

In summary, we say that it is from the nature of the Islamic creed that it descends upon those who claim divinity and the haughty and removes their loftiness and their tyranny. It prevents them from being insolent towards others. It raises the masses and the oppressed out of the climate of humiliation and servility that was imposed upon them and releases them into the highlands of freedom and dignity. It returns to them the feelings of honour and pride, and this is how these people and those people come together within the just and equal bounds, neither side having the opportunity or means to exploit or enslave the other.

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The events of history and examples of Islamic life that have been established on this earth are the best evidence for the clear, self-evident fact.

This meaning is perfectly embodied in His statement, Glorified and Exalted, which explains the wisdom behind sending Mūsā, peace be upon him, to Pharaoh as a warner and a guide: **"Pharaoh exalted himself arrogantly in the land and divided its people into camps, oppressing one group of them by slaughtering their sons and letting their women live. He was one of the corrupters. We desired to show kindness to those who were oppressed in the land and to make them leaders and to make them inheritors and establish them firmly in the land and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their troops the very thing they were fearing from them"** [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:4-6].

Thus, here is the need of all humanity to submit to their Creator, Mighty and Majestic, with firm conviction in His existence and His oneness, to submit to him with absolute slavehood in all the affairs and circumstances of their lives. In other words, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is not in need of any of this submission to Him or adhering to His command. Rather, our worldly felicity—let alone that of the Hereafter—makes us needy of and compels us towards this submission.

Allah, the Lord of all Creation, spoke the truth when He said: **"I only created jinn and man to worship Me. I do not require any provision from them and I do not require them to nourish Me. Truly Allah, He is the Provider, the Possessor of Strength, the Sure"** [al-Dhāriyāt 51:56-57].

* * *

2. The position of creed in relation to the entire Islamic structure

The Islamic structure is comprised of three elements, which are: Theology, legislation⁽¹⁾ and manners.

The meaning of Islam is perfected for the Muslim with the authentic creed when it is firmly settled in his heart, by following its Revealed Law in all of his transactions with Allah and with people, and with virtuous manners upon which his relations with others are established.

However, the pillar of all of this is the creed, for it is the first foundation that cannot be dispensed with, such that when this creed has inundated the heart that person is still a Muslim even if he falls short in applying the other two elements. Nevertheless, he bears sin for doing so, which makes him liable to the punishment of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, if the full creed is not present in his certainty and his understanding, he is not considered a Muslim, even if he spends his whole life in worship and acts of obedience and dyes all his entire comportment with the rulings of the Revealed Law and its etiquettes.

An example of these people is found in the statement of Allah the Exalted: **"Say: 'Shall I inform you of the greatest losers in their actions? People whose efforts in the life of this world are misguided while they suppose that they are doing good.' Those are the people who reject their Lord's Signs and the meeting with Him. Their actions will come to nothing and, on the Day of Standing, we will not assign them any weight"** [al-Kahf 18:103-105].

¹ By legislation we mean acts of worship, transactions and all other legal rulings.

From this standpoint, it is true that the religion (*al-dīn*) and the creed (*al-'aqīdah*) are the same thing, as it is the entire affair. Thus, it is said, 'So-and-so professes the religion of Islam' or 'he has embraced Islam' if you see him affirming and avowing its full creed without any alternation or subtraction and his certainty has submitted to all of its pillars. In order to be called this, it is not stipulated that all of the above be accompanied by practical behaviour in affairs of worship and all other rulings of the Revealed Law, even though falling short in any of them necessitates iniquity and exposes the structure of the creed itself to earthquakes.

The authentic creed cannot be multiplied or contradictory:

Then this creed has not differed since Adam, blessings and peace be upon him, was sent, all the way through to the sending of the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and its contents which the Prophets and Messengers have called to in succession are: faith in the existence of Allah and His oneness, His transcendence above everything that does not befit him, such as attributes of deficiency, faith in the Last Day, the Reckoning, Paradise, the Fire and so forth. Every Messenger called his people to have conviction in these matters, and by doing so each one of them confirmed the call of the one who was sent before him and gave the glad tidings of the mission of whoever was coming after him.

This is what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has explained in His Clear Book in several verses, such as the Exalted's statement: **"We sent no Messenger before you without revealing to him: 'There is no god but Me, so worship Me'"** [al-Anbiyā' 21:25].

There is also the Exalted's statement: **"He has laid down the same religion for you as He enjoined on Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you and which we enjoined on Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā: 'Establish the religion and do not make divisions in it'"** [al-Shūrā 42:13].

Indeed, if you study the verses of the Noble Qur'ān, you will notice that the name 'Islam' was the ancient, perennial name of this creed. Contemplate, for example, the Exalted's statement: **"Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a man of pure natural belief—a Muslim. He was not one of the idolaters"** [Āl 'Imrān 3:67].

Then there is the Exalted's statement regarding Pharaoh's magicians: **"They said, 'We are returning to our Lord. You are only avenging yourself on us because we believed in our Lord's Signs when they came to us. Our Lord, pour down steadfastness upon us and take us back to you as Muslims'"** [al-'A'rāf 7:125-126].

Then there is the Exalted's statement about 'Īsā's disciples, peace be upon him: **"When 'Īsā sensed unbelief on their part, he said, 'Who will be my helpers to Allah?' The disciples said, 'We are Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah. Bear witness that we are Muslims'"** [Āl 'Imrān 3:52].

From this it is made clear to you that the one, true religion is not multiplied, and that the expression "the Revealed Religions"⁽¹⁾, which is oft-repeated on the tongues of common people today, is a mistaken expression, as there is only one, true, revealed religion which the Prophets and Messengers have called to and been sent with, one after the other.

How can the true religion be multiplied or contradictory on the tongues of the Prophets and the Messengers, and religion (*dīn*) only means creed, as you have learned, and the statements of the creed are always communicated, as is known, and one communication cannot be transmitted in numerous, contradictory ways and forms, and then all of them—despite that—are authentic, veracious, revealed communications?

Yes, that which has developed and changed over time and by way

(1) Ar. *al-adyān as-samāwiyyah*, and the same applies to the expression "Abrahamic faiths".

of sending the Prophets and Messengers is the legislation, with the differing acts of worship and so forth. The wisdom behind that is that legislation is nothing other than the establishment of rulings with the intention of organising the life of the society and the individual. It is self-evident that development over time and the differing of nations and peoples have an effect on the development of their laws, for indeed the idea of legislation, from its very foundations, is based on what the interests of the slaves require in their worldly life and in the Hereafter, and these interests differ greatly according to different times and places.

For example, Mūsā, peace be upon him, was sent to the Children of Israel, and the affair necessitated—based on the circumstances of the Children of Israel at that time—that their Revealed Law be harsh and based entirely on the foundations of strictness and not dispensations. When some time had passed, our master ‘Īsā, peace be upon him, was sent amongst them. He came to them with a Revealed Law that was easier and simpler, and regarding this, look at Allah the Exalted’s statement on the tongue of ‘Īsā, peace be upon him, while he is addressing the Children of Israel:

“I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you” [Āl ‘Imrān 3:50]. He made clear to them that in terms of the creed, he was confirming what had come in the Torah, and that he was affirming it and renewing the call to it. As for the legislation and the rules of what is lawful and unlawful, he was commanded to make some changes and to make some things easier.

Legislations are instituted, and thus there is no harm in them changing with time and no rational objection to them being abrogated over the passing of historical epochs.

In summary, the mission of every Messenger includes a creed and some form of legislation.

As for the creed, the only thing that a Messenger has to do is affirm the same creed that was sent before without any change or difference. As for the legislation, indeed the Revealed Law of every Messenger abrogates the previous Revealed Law apart from whatever the later legislation reinforces or is quiet about, and that is the according to the school that says: a Revealed Law from before is a Revealed Law for us as long that there is nothing that contradicts it.

* * *

Therefore, when we study creedal matters and their proofs, we are only studying those realities that Allah has obligated His slaves to have faith and firm conviction in since the mission of Adam until Allah inherits the earth and everyone on it. That is the connection between the Islamic creed and everything that the Prophets and Messengers, may Allah bless them and grant them peace, have brought. The People of the Book know about this connection and they know about the oneness of the religion. They know that the Prophets only came to confirm one another, not to split up into disparate, contradictory creeds. However, they differed and split up amongst themselves and invented things about the Prophets, things that they had not said, despite the knowledge that had come to them, because they envied one another. Allah the Sublime spoke the truth when He said in His Masterful Exposition:

“The religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. Those given the Book only differed after knowledge had come to them, envying one another. As for those who reject Allah’s Signs, Allah is swift at reckoning” [Āl ‘Imrān 3:19].

* * *

Part One

Divinity

1. The Existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic

Introduction:

Faith in the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is the foundation of all creedal issues, and from it all other doctrinal matters which necessarily stimulate the intellect to contemplate them and then have faith in them branch out.

In other words, we say all the realities of the universe that you see are only the effect of one great reality, and that is the Essence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. It is impossible to grasp what the lesser, secondary issues are before grasping their primary source and foundation, thus there is no way to familiarise yourself with the universe without first familiarising yourself with its Creator.

You might say, 'But I do not believe in the Creator.' My answer to you would be, 'Then you must investigate the subject of His existence thoroughly and verify the notion that you do not believe in Him, and that is so that you do not eventually make a mistake in your understanding of the universe and the meaning of your existence therein'.

Let us begin the course by following the method that we have clarified:

'The existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic' is a scientific claim connected to science while at the same time it is not subject to experience and observation'.

Therefore, the path to verifying it is by one of two ways:

The first way is to verify the existence of Allah directly according to the method we have mentioned with regards to scientific matters that are not observable, such that if that is established with us through indisputable proofs, His existence demonstrates to us that He has not created anything in this universe in vain, which in turn shows

us the veracity of the Messengers and Prophets with regards to the commandments they were sent with. Faith in the Messengers leads us to faith in the Books and that the Qur'ān is the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Then faith in the speech of Allah leads us to have faith in everything it contains by way of its various reports, rulings, commands and prohibitions...we call this path the top down path.

The second path is to leave investigating the essence of Allah and start by looking at a report that has been transmitted to us about the reality of this Book that is in front of us and which is called the Qur'ān, such that if we know with indisputable proof that is connected to the verification of transmissions and reports that it has reached us via Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he says that it was revealed to him from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, we verify the meaning of revelation as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, himself has explained it with the scientific proofs that are harmonious with this claim, which are clear circumstantial evidence and analogy in accordance with what we have mentioned and its conditions above, such as thorough investigation and so forth.

Thus, if we have established for ourselves the veracity of the Messenger's claim, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and that the revelation is a fact in which the Messenger has no choice and is not something emotional originating from his being, we investigate to see what could be the source of this revelation, using circumstantial evidence based on thorough investigation. Then, if we have established for ourselves by way of examination that no one but Allah, may His majesty be manifest, could have sent down this revelation, this demonstrates to us that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, exists, and with that our faith increases in all the phases that we have already passed in the investigation. We call this way the bottom up way. Let us start by looking at the first way:

The Top Down Way

Every scientific fact, no matter how trivial, must eventually depend on a necessary fact (i.e. self-evident) that is not in need of proof. If not, the researcher remains seeking one proof after another in a never-ending sequence. Thus, ignorance is not removed and knowledge does not take its place.

Thus, what are the self-evident facts that need no proof, and upon which the evidence for Allah's existence, may His majesty be manifest, rests?

In answering this, we place in front of you a group of instinctive facts and principles which scholars have compiled because they are necessary and because they are proofs in and of themselves, and upon them we establish direct proof for his existence, Glorified and Exalted is He, by way of clear circumstantial evidence, which you have seen in the method of research. These facts are:

1. The falsity of something being preferred without anyone preferring it.
2. The falsity of infinite regression.
3. The falsity of alternation.
4. The law of causation⁽¹⁾.

1. The proof of the falsity of something being preferred without anyone preferring it:

The meaning of something being preferred without anyone preferring it is that the thing is proceeding in a certain manner and then it changes from its manner and diverts away from it without there being any one to change it or divert it whatsoever. This is a matter

(1) You might find it problematic that many people—even the educated amongst them—have never heard these terms and names, so how can we affirm that they comprise intuitive facts that all sane people know? The answer is that what is new or strange to them is only the expressions and terms. As for their contents, they are established and imprinted in the minds of all people, as you will see.

that is clearly false. Every sane person knows that the foundation remains upon what it was upon, and in order for it to divert from its previous state there has to be someone to divert it and influence it and impose upon it a new state and abrogate the old one.

If you understand this, then let us apply this proof to the issue of Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He:

All the matters and forms that are presumed in the mind can only be ascribed with one of three attributes: necessity, impossibility and possibility.

That which is ascribed necessity is that which the intellect deems impossible not to exist. That which is ascribed impossibility is that which the intellect deems impossible to exist. That which is ascribed possibility is that which the intellect deems possible to exist or not exist.

This universe which we see in its entirety falls under the category of possible. In other words, the intellect is absolutely certain that it would not be impossible to presume its non-existence and sees it as possible that the means of its non-existence exist from its foundation, without necessitating anything impossible that the intellect cannot accept. Therefore, the existence of the universe as such is not necessary. It is not indispensable. Everything that has this nature must have an external influencer that prefers one of the two sides of possibility and removes the other. This means that this universe, which from its foundation could equally exist or not exist, must have a force external to it that influences it and has specified it to exist, and that force is the force of Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

If you say, 'I assume that it was brought into existence by itself without any external force influencing it', this assumption of yours necessitates that something can be preferred without anyone preferring it, which is false, as you know, and the hypothesis that necessitated it is also false.

We can clarify this issue further and say there is no doubt that there was point in time when this universe was not something remembered, as absolute non-existence was in place of today's existence. This means that at that time the side of existence was what was preferred, and it continued as such. Then the matter was inverted and the side of existence was preferred over the side of absolute non-existence. If you say that the world was brought into existence by means of an intrinsic force without the need for an originator, then that means that you are saying that the side of existence can be preferred over the side of non-existence and the matter that continuing as such was inverted without there being any factor influencing this preference or unforeseen inversion. This is something that man knows instinctively to be false.

If you went and claimed that you had held a scale by its accurate beam and you had put the same weight on each side without adding anything to either of them, and then, while the two sides were even, all of sudden one of them went down while the other went up without any external influence that the mind could conceive—everyone would abandon you, worrying about your cogitation and intellect. So what if you said to them that you had placed a weight on one of the two sides and while you were holding the scale from its beam and the heavy side was being weighed down, all of a sudden the situation changed: the heavy side went up and the light side sank, despite its lightness?

Indeed, saying the continuous, absolute non-existence suddenly transformed into existence, which interacts and reproduces, without any external cause for this transformation—is no less impossible and strange than the claim of the person with the scale.

However, you know that all of this is based on the presumption that the one who doubt's Allah's existence says, as most sane people firmly believe, that the world is contingent, i.e. it was preceded by non-existence, regardless of the age of this prolonged existence.

But what if it were said to us, after this clear, self-evident proof, 'I presume that the world always existed the way it does now. It has no beginning and it was not preceded by non-existence, and thus there is only one side and you have no proof to make me agree with what you are saying'?

Here we move on to the second instinctive fact:

2. The proof of the falsity of infinite regression:

At that point we say, 'You mean, therefore, that this world is continuing according to the rule of self-procreation that has no beginning. This presumption necessitates infinite regression, and all sane people know instinctively that infinite regression is impossible, and thus the impossibility of the hypothesis that led to it is also made clear.'

The meaning of infinite regression is the presumption that all created beings are endlessly reproduced from one another, such that each one of them is caused by what came before it and is the cause of what comes after it without this chain eventually originating from a cause that exists by necessity which grants the effect of reproduction to all the other links in the chain.

This presumption is false. The intellect necessarily deems it impossible, as the chain of possible created beings, however long it may be, its ongoing length cannot escape the fact that its existence is only possible, and possible things, in order form to be preferred to exist or not exist, must have someone who makes that preference, as we have said. This long chain, which you say stretches back into a deep cave that never ends, is comprised of links each of which would not exist were it not for the link before it giving it life and existence, and it itself gives life as well. Therefore, all the links of the chain, none of them have any intrinsic influence, however long the chain may be, and therefore, in order to affirm that it exists, we must wait for the emergence of an external influencer who provided

with the chain this life that has been transferred from one link to the next. If not, then we have to decisively affirm one of two matters: either this entire chain does not exist, as the existence of whoever initially gave it life is not established, or it exists but it eventually originates from an essence that exists by necessity and it influences it and is not influenced by it at all. As for the first matter, it is patently false, because perception and observation deny it. The world exists and the reproduction of causes is something seen and witnessed. The second matter remains, and it is that you are certain that there must be an essential source that gave it life and the ability to develop and reproduce. Thus, the abovementioned regression is false.

Let us give some examples of this issue that are smaller than the vastness of the world so that that the matter can be clearer and more self-evident.

1. If I were to stand in front of you claiming that I know a scientific fact for certain, and when you asked me about the evidence I mentioned to you some proof which itself is a unknown proof that depends on a proof, and when you asked me for the proof of this proof, I brought you a proof just like it that depended on another proof...and so on with no end, i.e. without all these proofs eventually ending up at a necessary reality that is known intuitively, you would deny my claim to certainty regarding this fact. Indeed, you would deny that it exists at all, as there is no proof established for it yet and all the continuous proofs that we had assumed to be endless are nothing but shadows waiting for their original source. If that source does not exist then these shadows themselves do not exist, and thus this claimed fact also does not exist.

2. If you see a long mathematical number in which a large number of zeros are joined together, you would quickly look, before anything else, look at the first, essential number that has all the zeros on its right. As long as your eyes have not seen that number, you will not give those zeros any mathematical value. Why?

This is because you know that a zero by itself had no numerical value. It only draws its value from the zero that is next to it, and that zero draws its numerical value from a third zero, and then a fourth, and then a fifth, until the zeros end up at a numerical number like one or more. It is this number that has the essential value inside of it. It is the one that gives life and value to the continuous zeros next to it. If we presumed that the chain of zeros did not end up at a numerical number possessing some essential value, these zeros would be devoid of any value. Indeed, they would be devoid of any meaning of existence, and the presumption of an endless sequence is something that ipso facto never changes and is never given any value.

3. You see in your friend's house a place that has beautiful flowers and a pure fragrance. When you ask him where these beautiful flowers come from, he says that they are a branch that he took from a root by his neighbour's house. When you ask the neighbour, he in turn answers you by saying that what he has is just a part that he took from a friend's house. Then the third person gives you the same answer the second person gave you, and you get the same answer from the fourth, fifth and sixth. Each one of them answers you by saying that what they have is just a part from someone else, and in vain you follow this sequence looking for the source of this plant and its progenitor that gave it appearance and structure and enabled it to branch out for the very beginning. If it were said to you that the sequence of this branching out and splitting up continues endlessly, what would your intellect conclude with the least amount of thinking?

There is no doubt that you would conclude that this speech is a lie, because branching out, regardless of how much it reproduces and increases, can only be the result of the existence of a source that is established in and of itself and which gives those branches existence or life. If it were said that there is no source for it and we assume the

speaker to be truthful, that would mean that it still has not been born, and therefore these claimed branches also have no existence whatsoever. As for if you were to see the plants' branches with your own eyes that would mean that there is an essential source that gave all these branches existence, regardless of how remote this source and regardless of whether you have thought about it or inquired about it.

Any sane person understands that a sequence of causes that acquire the ability to cause comes from the causes that come before it, such as the sequence of zeros or the sequence of the plants' branches or the sequence of the abovementioned proofs. Therefore, no sane person can claim that the entire existence of the world is based on nothing other than a reproducing sequence without being preceded by an essential influencer that is external to its reality and exists by necessity. Otherwise, it would be valid to claim that the value of one million is only comprised of successive zeros alternating the value amongst themselves without relying on an essential number coming before them, or to claim that the flowers found in the gardens and houses are originally nothing but branches taken from one another without going back to a source that provided them with the foundation of existence.

In this regard, we say what the majestic scholar, ash-Shaykh Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī said in his lofty book *Mawqif al-'Aql wa al-'Ilm wa al-'Ālim min Rabb al-'Ālamīn*⁽¹⁾:

'If you say to an atheist, "What is the cause of the existence of this existence that needs a cause that brings it into existence?", he will answer by saying that it is the existence of another existence that preceded it. Then you say to him, "What is the cause of the existence of that existence that preceded it?" He will answer by saying that the existence of a third existence existed before it, and like the second it

(1) (tn): i.e. *The Position of the Intellect, Science and the Scientist with regards to the Lord of All Creation*.

needs a cause that brings it into existence. This chain of answers in this way will never end, no matter how long it goes on for and how far you make it in questioning—so know that this antagonist is deceiving you, misleading you and distracting you with his answers as they actually contain no answer whatsoever, just as he is deceiving, misleading and distracting himself before doing so to you. What I mean is that he cannot show you the cause of the existence of that existence whose cause of existence you asked him about first, and thus he flees from answering your question without knowing that he is fleeing. Then he tries to hide the fact that he is fleeing from answering by turning the matter into layers of continuous darkness that have no beginning. He makes you think that there is a cause before a cause and then continues with this delusion until you have a chain of causes that have no beginning, and thus none of it can be a cause as it has no source and it has not existence.⁽¹⁾

After all of this is, the presumption of infinite regression is destroyed by perception and observation itself, because we all know that there are specific created beings that have died out and become extinct, and thus if it were true that existent beings were part of an endless chain, such that each link was caused by the link before it and causes the link after it, these existent beings would not die out. How can any of them die out when they are the cause of what comes after them? When perception and observation show us that they die out and they do not continue reproducing, we know that the last link was only caused and was not a cause like the one before it. This is a violation of this claimed chain system and its nature, and is evidence that there is an external influencer influencing the monotonous chain system.

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(1) *Mawqif al-'Aql* (2/182); if you want a more detailed treatment of creedal matters and their various proofs, then this is the book for you, as nothing like it has been written in this age.

3. The proof of the falsity of alternation:

Then we presume that the doubter thinks for a while and then says, 'I go back to the position that the world is temporal, like I said before. It has a cause that influenced its coming into existence, but this cause is not embodied in more than gradual, self-produced interaction. At the beginning of its origination, the universe was nothing more than air filling empty space. Then there was the mist from which specific gases and vapours coagulated, and then from that the primary elements of life reached completion, such as carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. Then, from that, organic compounds came together without limit. Millions of years passed during which these things interacted with each other, moving from one phase to another through the factor of time and continuation, until eventually the elements of living beings and others reached completion. Thus the world is temporal, but that which causes its temporality⁽¹⁾ and existence is this interaction that started with the simplest of beings and advanced into more complex and higher forms.'

The answer is that this presumption necessitates the position of alternation, and alternation is a false hypothesis that has not been proven true by consensus of reasonable people.

The meaning of false alternation is that something depends, in its absolute existence or its specific forming, on something else, except that this thing, in that existence and forming, depends at the same time on that first thing. Thus it is impossible for both this thing and that thing to be brought into existence or formed. You cannot find a sane person who will say, 'Indeed they cooperated and each one brought the other into existence'.

An example of this would be to imagine that you tried to study at a teachers' college and it was said to you that you had to be an employee in an official teaching organisation. Then, when you tried

(1) Ar. *hudūth*, or the fact that it happens.

to join the teaching organisation they told you that you had to be a graduate of the teachers' college. It is self-evident you would not be able to achieve either option for yourself as long as that is the case.

Another example would be to say that the existence of the egg depends on the existence of the chicken and then say that the existence of the chicken itself depends on the egg, and we assume that neither has any means of existence other than this way. Thus, it is self-evident that both remain non-existent until an external influencer comes and breaks the circle of this alternation⁽¹⁾.

If this is known, we say to the one who affirms the temporality of the world and that it came into existence by influencing itself, 'What is the first nucleus or atom from the atoms of the world that appeared in existence before everything else?' Whatever this thing may be, we say, 'What is the cause that brought it into existence and raised it from the darkness of nothingness and put it on the first steps of existence?'

Your statement that it is self-produced interaction means that the cause influenced its own coming into existence. In other words, when it was in the darkness of absolute non-existence, its existence depended on it being brought forth out of the depths of this non-existence it was in. When it had been brought forth and had appeared in the field of existence, it was ready for it because it had become the cause of its own existence. This is what has happened. This small atom was brought forth first from the depths of non-existence and by doing so became the cause of its own coming into existence! This is alternation in the clearest of its forms.

(1) Alternation is of two categories: explicit and implicit. The explicit would be to say that A depends on B and B, at the same time, depends on A, or that the thing depends on itself, as if to say that the existence of A depends on the existence of A, or like our example of the existence of the world depending on itself. The implicit would be to say that A depends on B, B depends on C and C depends on A. We have added a link to the sphere of alternation but in the end we go back to depending on the first link, and thus it is also ascertained to be false.

Can you retain any atom of intellect in your head and then affirm a statement like this?

This falsehood never changes, or this impossibility never becomes possible, by you deceiving yourself and giving it a sleeker and wittier way of expressing, such as the word "interaction" or "self-producing procreation" and other similar phrases. If terms and expressions had the power to change and transform meanings then the words "nature" or "natural selection" or "survival of the fittest" and so forth would abrogate necessary realities and turn knowledge into ignorance and ignorance into knowledge. People would be free of bearing the burdens of knowledge and studying the realities of things, as they would have the commodities of terms and the freedom to formulate them however they wish, instead of bearing that effort for which there is no need.

However, all reasonable people know that terms and phrases come behind facts. It is not the facts that are drawn out to be subject to the will of the terms.

* * *

Now it is clear to you that the position that the world came into being with a single jump without any cause influencing it is false, because it necessitates a hypothesis that is self-evidently false, which is that something cannot be preferred⁽¹⁾ without someone preferring it.

It is clear to you that the position that the universe is eternal is false because it necessitates an endless chain of things that are merely possible, and infinite regression is also self-evidently false.

It is clear to you that the position that the world is its own cause and that it influenced its own coming into existence necessitates the position of alternation, which is also a matter that is necessarily false.

(1) (tn): i.e. to exist or not exist.

What, then, remains? What remains is that the world must have an independent creator who brought it into existence, and this Creator does not need someone to bring Him into existence. He is what we call the essence that exists by necessity, and He is Allah, Glorified and Exalted.

The existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has become manifest with indisputable evidence based on the proof of circumstantial evidence concentrated on thorough investigation.

The law of causation or 'the final cause':

After this, let us move from circumstantial evidence on to analogy.

We put before you another absolute, established, self-evident fact and upon it we base another decisive proof for the existence of the One who exists by necessity, may His majesty be manifest, by way of indisputable, primary analogy based on thorough investigation.

This fact is what we can correctly call 'the final cause evidence' or the evidence of wisdom and universal order⁽¹⁾.

(1) The final cause and the instigating cause mean the same thing, and it is an expression of the intention that pushes you to realise an action. If this intention were not established in your mind and in your inclination to realise it, you would not do this specific action. Thus, this intention of yours is the cause of its existence.

It is from the nature of this final cause that it precedes the thing caused in terms of mental existence, and it comes after it in terms of external existence. Thus, obtaining a degree is the final cause of a student's studies, and it is a matter that is concentrated and present in the mind before the studies. Then it becomes present in the outer world afterwards.

We are not using this phenomenon in the universe that demonstrates Allah's existence because we want to justify Allah's actions based on final causes, as there is not a single thing in the universe that is an actual means of achieving specific ends according to Allah, Mighty and Majestic. If that were the case then it would lead to attributing incapacity to Allah. Rather, what is meant is that the universe is composed in its existence and in the existence of its constituent parts in a specific, regulatory manner that engenders important ends

We will explain this fact to you and its meaning, starting with a small example, then a bigger one and then the topic that we are actually discussing, which is the manifestation of this world.

1. Imagine that you are looking at a vessel in front of you, and you find inside it scattered fragments from various tiny instruments. After deep contemplation, you start to realise the connection of harmony and familiarity between the particles of these tools, and you discover that each single part of it has an exact structural place in relation to the others. Thus, you start gathering these parts together and combining them according to this structure that it was designed on the basis of. When you have finished placing the last instrument in its place, you are surprised by a precise, monotonous sound being emitted steadily from inside those instruments that had turned into a complete appliance. You contemplate and realise that it is a timepiece that precisely determines the course of time and its movement—so what made you realise this after all of that?

You realise, without doubt, that every single one of those tiny instruments has a particular, specific objective for which it was prepared to realise, and that in combination they have one specific objective, which is the determining of time.

And with this you realise—again without doubt—that there is a planner behind the pushing of these tiny instruments towards realising that specific, greater objective.

2. Imagine that you have entered a huge international airport and you have your luggage with you, occupying both of your hands. As you approach the closed glass doors, you are surprised to see both of them open in front of you automatically.

for man, while we know that Allah was and is still capable of realising these ends without the means of anything from the manifestations of the universe. This subject has a lot of detail, which we will discuss when talking about the meaning of Allah's attribute Will, Mighty and Majestic is He.

Then you go through them and they close again, going back to the way they were, while you thank this wondrous, automatic coincidence, looking back at the doors in astonishment and amazement. Then they open again as someone else, just like you, approaches them. At that point, you put down your bags and contemplate, and you see that this matter is repeated according to a system, which is whenever someone approaches and there is a need for it.

When you go back and look for the reality of the matter, motivated by your inquisitiveness, you realise that the door is mounted on a device hidden beneath it that is instantly stimulated when someone is walking above it, and this is what makes the doors split up and open.

Your mind spontaneously comes to the conclusion that this device and its movement have a final cause, which is to facilitate the passing of travellers who might not have a free hand—due to carrying their luggage—to open the door. As long as this admirable, humane objective is not something that can depend on inanimate instruments that do not perceive or possess intellect, then this design must come from the planning of some thinking people.

This notion that appears to you in these two examples applies to all similar examples, as there is no specific structural group that coordinates towards realising an objective, driving towards realising it, except that behind this group there is a planning intellect. As an example you can look at all the various diverse appliances and at what is called manufactured goods, such as clothes, furnishings, household effects, houses and so forth.

This is the self-evident fact that is called the 'final cause evidence' or the evidence of wisdom and order in something, and it is the foundation of the issue of proving Allah's existence, based on an influencing cause established by thorough investigation.

If you move on after that and look at the structure of this amazing universe, you will see how its parts are superimposed on one another,

how the parts of those parts are superimposed on one another, and how its tiny atoms are superimposed on one another without splitting, fully congruent down to the tiniest measure that can be imagined. You will see the small parts therein moving towards realising specific ends in harmony with other parts. You will see, after that, all the parts and particles moving towards realising certain lofty ends within exact circumstances and conditions, such that if any part of it were to make the slightest deviation that can possibly be imagined, those ends would not be realised. Indeed, all of it would be ruined.

If you were to go and continue to describe the phenomena of order and harmony between all the existent beings that you see in front of you, a lifetime would not be sufficient to examine and elucidate it. You would come back with your mind spurned and exhausted from the splendour of the amazing planning that flows, starting from the electrons of atoms to the earth and all the things existing upon it, to the sky and all the celestial bodies it contains; all of them proceeding according to a monotonous system, none of them lagging behind, and all of them concentrated on wondrous, magnificent objectives, most of which end up serving man and his interests.

Contemplate the earth and you will find that it has a specific weight which gives it a certain amount of gravitational pull. Contemplate this gravitational pull and you will find that it has been measured to the right amount that man needs to establish an ordered life upon it.

If the weight of the earth were increased, its gravitational pull would increase, and if its gravitational pull were increased man would not be able to move about in its surface. He would be stuck to it and would only be able to drag himself across it. If the earth weighed less, its gravitational pull would decrease, and man would not be able to settle on it as he pleases. This clearly shows you that the earth has an objective, which is to be an abode and place of rest for man upon which he finds safety and stability.

Contemplate your seeing eyes and you will find that, in general and in their detail, they are based on the most exact laws of sight, which scientists are still helpless at understanding. Then look and you will find that the laws of light in the universe have been facilitated from them⁽¹⁾ and the path had been subjugated for them from before. Thus, you will not doubt that this and that have been gathered for a specific purpose, which is that with these two eyes you can see the entire visible world. This meaning is embodied in front of you when you listen to any scientist describe the intricacies of the eye, for example, and how it is structured. You will find him giving an explanation of why something is as such in every sentence he says. You will find him talking about the nerves that extend from the brain to the eye, that they are connected to it so that it can transfer to 'the icy moisture therein' news of incoming images and thus impress them therein. The pupil is nothing but that black husk under the cornea, coloured black so that it can restrict diaphanous objects behind it and thus whatever light is obtained from them does not spread therein. The cornea is limited so that it can gather images inside, and so forth. Thus, the researcher cannot analyse and describe without having to explain and justify why things are the way they are. However, what is it that pushes us towards this justification that is one of the most complex procedures of will and comprehension? Can the intellect imagine, even for one moment, that all these moistures and viscidities and nerves are the ones expressing will, then combining, then mediating and then causing?

Contemplate your lung and you will find that it is in harmony with the proportion of oxygen that is in the air, such that if it were to increase or decrease, it would no longer be fully capable of keeping you alive. Thus, there is no doubt that these two phenomena come together to realise an objective that is connected to fully realising the means of your life.

(1) (tn): i.e. your eyes.

Contemplate yourself and the capacities for intelligence that have been placed inside you (and you are a part of this universe, as you know) and you will find that you have been given a weapon that is ceaselessly amazing by its very nature and all of creation still do not fully understand it. Contemplate and you will know that the existence of this capacity has a specific objective, which is to use it to subjugate all the existent beings that you see around you; with it you can possess the keys of benefitting from them and you can plunge their depths and arrive at their roots and the forces of activity that they contain.

Use what I have mentioned to you as an analogy and apply it to the various phenomena of the universe that you see or that you can think about. You will see that all of them proceed towards certain objectives that give this existence the most accurate illustrations of harmony and order, and they give man mercy and the ability to conduct his various affairs.

If you know this then there is no doubt that you will be certain of the following:

Just as we say the emergence of the final cause in appliances and the various manufactured goods produced by man are a decisive evidence for the existence of a planner who designed them in this way, as inanimate appliances do not have the ability to think and direct themselves towards certain objectives—then the emergence of the final cause is this greatest apparatus, which is the universe, with this amazing appearance, is decisive proof that behind it there is a planner that is pushing it towards these objectives that it has. They are objectives that all human equipment, working together, would not be able to aim for the like of.

This clear fact, which forms another indisputable proof for Allah's existence, may His majesty be manifest, and what Westerners call 'the final cause' and what the scholars of *kalām*⁽¹⁾ call 'the evidence

(1) (tn): i.e. scholastic theology.

of wisdom and harmony' is that which the Qur'ān continues to direct intellects towards by way of various wonderful styles that are understood by people regardless of their level and education.

It is a proof that holds the atheists' tongues and saps them of all their strength. However, whomever Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wants to bring down His eternal punishment upon (as they are not grateful for the blessing of intellect that is in their heads and thus use it for free inquiry), Allah veils his intellect from all of these, decisive self-evident proofs. Therefore, do not be surprised if you find one of them saying:

'It is possible that everything you are saying is just a coincidence'. Then he will continue and give examples of how this could be possible. He will say, 'If we scattered a large amount of printed letters on a vast surface hoping that they would form the collection of poems of Homer or Victor Hugo, and this attempt was repeated for several years, millions of years, then maybe once or twice scattering these letters would form one part or another of these poems, and so on and so forth until the collection of poems was completed over a long period of time'.

If you reflect on what is being said, you will find the person to be delirious and without intellect. Indeed you will be amazed at the level of folly this person reaches while at the same time feigning research and thought.

I give you an illustration of this folly in what the great scholar and teacher Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī said in critique of such a person in his book *Mawqif al-'Aql*:

'This person should be responded to by saying that an absence of order will never turn into order by itself, not in a million years. Rather, over time it would become more muddled and tangled. It does not benefit them to imagine the possibility of one part from a collection of poems being formed in each period of time, as they do

not have the right to assume that the formed part will be maintained and everything aside from it will be scattered the second time until another part is formed, and so on until all the poems have taken shape. Rather, one must assume that each scattering will include all the letters that were scattered the first time, which includes the letters that made up the formed part. Thus, whatever was formed the first time will be nullified by the second time, and if something is formed that second time it will be nullified by the third time. If we do not presume this to be the case, then the maintaining of the formed letters whenever they occur and preventing them from being scattered again would be an intended order, which would be the opposite of what is being presumed, i.e. there is no intended order'⁽¹⁾.

This is not the full extent of this folly of theirs. They go to extremes, such as denying that our eyes were created so that we could see, our ears so that we could hear, our minds so that we could think and understand, because if they did not deny these it would necessitate them to say that they were created for final causes, and thus they would be made for this benefit by a maker acting of his will. Therefore, they flee from this necessity. If they were to be made responsible for it, they would take on contentious burdens that the intellect cannot imagine. Thus you see them saying, 'The eye coming together with sight is a mere coincidence. The ear coming together with hearing is also a mere coincidence. This brain inside your head coming together with thought is also a mere coincidence'.

And I say: By my life and by the True Lord, this folly itself is the most profound proof articulating Allah's existence! The intellect cannot be hindered from being guided to anything clearer than what is clearly in front of it, if the process it follows towards understanding things is like a machine. As for when it is hindered from understanding, despite being present and all the elements of

(1) *Mawqif al-'Aql* 2/348.

understanding being present (after the person had inclined towards denying Allah's essence and had become too haughty to contemplate justly), this is the most profound evidence that this capacity can only come from the planning of a Wise Originator who has prevented it from producing in the head of this haughty person, as a reward for his haughtiness and realising the cause of his eternal punishment on the Day of Standing.

If you contemplate these proofs that we have presented, you will realise that the word 'atheism⁽¹⁾' means nothing more than opposing the intellect, regardless of what type of atheism it is and its source and regardless of its philosophy or its motives.

However, you will not find a type of atheism more obstinate and more antagonistic to the intellect than the type that is based on materialistic philosophy, which claims that matter is the mother of existence and its father, and that all the phenomena of the universe only originate and increase by way of contradictions coming together and clashing, such that whatever is superior prevails while the other falls into nothingness. It is a philosophy that developed and flourished one day in certain parts of the world. Then it sank, withered and disappeared and the intellectual structure that it was based on was demolished. All that remained was the political skeleton, one half clinging on to the other half and the other half clinging on to it: one half clinging on so it can be the pillar that establishes it and the other clinging on so that it can be the megaphone that assists it.

This philosophy has proofs—in any case—and they are all the proofs that we have mentioned. Then, after that, it is also backed up by the clearest, self-evident, accepted truths, which are based on resistance and opposition to it.

We will discuss both branches of this philosophy as they are known by their masters:

(1) Ar. *al-ilhād*.

- Dialectical Materialism

- Historical Materialism

We start by discussing the first branch and we say:

One of the accepted truths that the intellect believes in, regardless of what head it is inside of, is that two opposites cannot come together at one time and in one place and one cannot be reproduced from the other. Thus, black and non-black are opposites and therefore it is not possible for them to come together at one specific time, such that one could truthfully describe a specific place at a certain moment as being both dark black and brilliant white, and that is why dark black can never originate from brilliant whiteness, as that would necessitate something being reproduced from its opposite, and the two of them coming together, even for a moment, is clearly impossible⁽¹⁾.

It is known that matter is what exists, it is inanimate and does not perceive, and it is the opposite of the spirit, which is present and it senses and perceives. If we thus claim that the foundation of life in the universe, or indeed the foundation of everything in existence, is matter—then that means that the life that flows in our bodies can only originate from inanimate matter, which is the opposite of life...

When looking for any meaning to this speech, it is unavoidable that only one of two meanings can be understood. There is no third.

Either the meaning is to persist in saying that inanimate matter and life are contradictory and despite that they came together, or indeed the first of them originated the second, and it is clear that this meaning is an amazing opposition to the intellect.

Or the meaning is that matter is not, as we presume, the opposite of life. Rather, they come together in one, essential reality. Therefore, why do they insist that the foundation of life is matter and not say that

(1) For further discussion on this topic, please see the author's book *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*, p.57 to 66.

understanding being present (after the person had inclined towards denying Allah's essence and had become too haughty to contemplate justly), this is the most profound evidence that this capacity can only come from the planning of a Wise Originator who has prevented it from producing in the head of this haughty person, as a reward for his haughtiness and realising the cause of his eternal punishment on the Day of Standing.

If you contemplate these proofs that we have presented, you will realise that the word 'atheism⁽¹⁾' means nothing more than opposing the intellect, regardless of what type of atheism it is and its source and regardless of its philosophy or its motives.

However, you will not find a type of atheism more obstinate and more antagonistic to the intellect than the type that is based on materialistic philosophy, which claims that matter is the mother of existence and its father, and that all the phenomena of the universe only originate and increase by way of contradictions coming together and clashing, such that whatever is superior prevails while the other falls into nothingness. It is a philosophy that developed and flourished one day in certain parts of the world. Then it sank, withered and disappeared and the intellectual structure that it was based on was demolished. All that remained was the political skeleton, one half clinging on to the other half and the other half clinging on to it: one half clinging on so it can be the pillar that establishes it and the other clinging on so that it can be the megaphone that assists it.

This philosophy has proofs—in any case—and they are all the proofs that we have mentioned. Then, after that, it is also backed up by the clearest, self-evident, accepted truths, which are based on resistance and opposition to it.

We will discuss both branches of this philosophy as they are known by their masters:

(1) *Ar. al-ilhād.*

- Dialectical Materialism

- Historical Materialism

We start by discussing the first branch and we say:

One of the accepted truths that the intellect believes in, regardless of what head it is inside of, is that two opposites cannot come together at one time and in one place and one cannot be reproduced from the other. Thus, black and non-black are opposites and therefore it is not possible for them to come together at one specific time, such that one could truthfully describe a specific place at a certain moment as being both dark black and brilliant white, and that is why dark black can never originate from brilliant whiteness, as that would necessitate something being reproduced from its opposite, and the two of them coming together, even for a moment, is clearly impossible⁽¹⁾.

It is known that matter is what exists, it is inanimate and does not perceive, and it is the opposite of the spirit, which is present and it senses and perceives. If we thus claim that the foundation of life in the universe, or indeed the foundation of everything in existence, is matter—then that means that the life that flows in our bodies can only originate from inanimate matter, which is the opposite of life...

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Or the meaning is that matter is not, as we presume, the opposite of life. Rather, they come together in one, essential reality. Therefore, why do they insist that the foundation of life is matter and not say that

(1) For further discussion on this topic, please see the author's book *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*, p.57 to 66.

the foundation of matter is life? What is the difference between the two expressions as long as matter is not (according to this meaning) not the opposite of life but instead come together in an essence and in a common plateau?

This question remains unanswered as long as it is not in the hands of the materialists and in their ideas there is no constitution explaining why it is that life is what originated from matter and the opposite is not what took place.

The position that matter is the source of life becomes imbecilic, and is not based on any proof or preference.

And this is how the incoherence of their position becomes clear to you: matter is the source of all existence, regardless of whether we explain it according to the first meaning or according to the second meaning, and you will never, ever find any third meaning.

Then, after that, this philosophy is proven by the demonstrable fact of tangible experience. If life is nothing but one of the fruits of inanimate matter, then why do they not understand the secret of life? Why can they not bring life into existence by way of chemical reaction? Why do they not understand the material elements that life is made up of?

The horizons of knowledge⁽¹⁾ have spread to the extent that they include the intricacies of matter, its secrets and its atoms, and science has even brought the intricacies of the atom to light and the reservoir of energies that it contains. How can we comprehend science's authority spreading to this extent regarding matter, which is the origin and source, and then this authority shrinks completely and is totally lost when it comes to life, which is a fruit and a branch?

Can a person believe that a scientist knows the exact analysis of a tree from its deepest roots to its highest leaves but when he wants some knowledge about its fruits, the matter is completely incomprehensible

(1) (tn): or science.

to him and he does not understand a thing about them?

You might say: how do you know that they have not investigated life and they do not understand a thing about it?

The answer is that all scientists agree that science has not arrived at understanding anything about the reality of life, and the topic of the spirit is included with unseen matters that science has no authority over.

The first of those to acknowledge this ignorance was Engels, the colleague of Marx, in laying down materialist philosophy and propagating it, he says in his book *Anti-Dühring* the following:

'Indeed it—i.e. natural science—has not yet been successful in producing primordial matter and other albuminous substances, such as chemical elements. Furthermore, to this day it is not within the capacity of natural science to affirm anything regarding the origin of life'.

Then time passed and science advanced, and in the year 1959 six of the most prominent and distinguished scientists of the east and the west met at a round table in the city of New York in order to work together towards understanding something about the source of life and its origin on this earth. One of them was the Russian scientist Alexander Ivanovich Oparin, professor of biochemistry at the USSR Academy of Sciences and the one most concerned with the topic of life's origin.

The conference ended as it had begun, without the conferees arriving at anything but further confirmation that the issue of life is still unknown, and there is no desire that science will arrive at it some day in the future. The first person to confirm this was that Russian scientist himself.

The summary of this position—as stated by Dr Anwar 'Abdul 'Alīm—is that science has not yet arrived at unveiling this greatest

secret, known as life, just as it is clear that this problem is the most remote from a structure of constituent parts and especially natural and chemical phenomena⁽¹⁾.

The sublime divine wisdom necessitated that this reality increase in certainty and affirmation on the tongue of the same Russian scientist, for in the year 1959 various news agencies, at the forefront of whom was the Soviet news agency TASS, transmitted the following:

‘Alexander Oparin, president of the Biochemistry Institute in Russia, after 37 years of researching the origin of life and researching whether it would be possible to bring the primordial cell into existence by way of a chemical reaction, has declared that it is not possible for life to begin from non-existence or to reproduce by way of chemical reaction or self-procreation and that science cannot delve into what is beyond the limits of matter’.

Thus, after this statement and what preceded it, what meaning is there left for the materialist philosophy that Marx imagined one day, due to some certain, emotional motive? Here you can see that we are not the ones who are removing its delusive, philosophical veil behind which hides a great deal of ignorance and delusion. Rather, the one doing that is one of their own, one of their own has born witness, and Allah has sufficed the believers and fought on their behalf.

As for the details of this philosophy and looking into its statements and principles, we are not going to discuss them now or refute them. They are, nevertheless, statements that are not backed up by any scientific proofs. The only thing they go back to is the expedient factors, and you can read all of the details of this in our book *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*.

* * *

(1) You can read about this conference in the book *Qiṣṣat al-Taṭawwur* by Dr Anwar ‘Abdul ‘Alīm p.11-23 and see the book *Anti-Dühring*, translated from the English by Dr Fu‘ād Ayūb p.90.

Then we will discuss the second branch of this philosophy, which is historical **materialism**. We say:

What is meant by this title is the claim that the structure of human society and the various values, ideas, languages and knowledge it contains, all of it originates from the economic situation which in turn originates from the cause of all causes, which is “the means of production”, and based on this, “absolute truth” has no place whatsoever in existence. In its place and throughout all of existence there is the law of “developing relativity” in everything, as knowledge itself is the product of its economic circumstances, and thus where would absolute truth come from?

Then they claim that the structure of human society develops under the authority of the economic situation and the means of production, dialectically, i.e. by way of factors within it that bear the seeds of it is opposite and not by way of external factors as is the case with a cause and something caused. Thus, the flourishing of the means of production causes the capital to grow and this situation itself carries within it the seeds of revolution against it, which is caused by the means of production being transferred to the proletariat. This contradiction between the means of production and proprietary relations continues to be the sole factor behind the conflict within society, and this conflict will continue until class division is removed from society forever and the world enters the great phase of communism. That is when this conflict will die down, the storm will settle and everything will come to an end.

We will evaluate these ideas according to the standard of ‘circumstantial evidence’ that we clarified in the method of research. We say:

1. The means of production, which are the original cause of every development and phenomenon in this universe, emerged in human history alongside animals. In the very beginning, the phenomena of

the hand and stones appeared in man, and the phenomena of claws and fangs appeared in animals, and there is no doubt that there were animals that were stronger than man. If this philosophy were true, the knowledges, languages, intellect, religions and economic systems that developed in human society would have also developed in animal society, and, as is obvious, that is simply not the case.

The sole difference between human society and the world of other animals is the difference of intellect and cognition: this difference has remained established throughout the various developments that the world has gone through. If this difference itself were merely one of the effects of the common denominator between these two creations, which is "the means of production", then how can this law be submitted to in the case of man, and thus there are knowledges, intellects, languages and economic and social systems, and rebelled against in the case of animals, and thus there is no knowledge or intellect or system?

As long as philosophical materialism does not talk about the cause of this it is a false philosophy for which there is no evidence of its veracity.

2. The requirement of control of the dialectic principle, that the structure of human society remain in development and contradiction, and this means that the establishment of absolute communism by its nature in turn carries within itself the seeds of its opposite, in consideration of the fact that it is one of the human phases that revolve around the economic celestial body. However, they claim that the movement of development comes to a complete stop with the emergence of absolute communism, and this clearly and glaringly contradicts their initial claims.

One of two things: either the dialectic system has true control over the course of the world, and thus it is not true that the flame of development is put out by the establishment of absolute communism,

or what is true is the second, which is that the end of class division finishes off all development and puts an end to conflict, and thus it is not true what they say about the dialectic controlling the activity of the world.

3. If the flourishing of the economy and the growth of capital were what stoked the flames of revolution and caused the means of production to be transferred to the proletariat, that would necessitate that this revolution take place in Switzerland, America and the countries of Western Europe before appearing anywhere else in the world, but instead of taking place there it emerged in Russia and China and at times in which their economies were weak and backward.

The flames of revolution were stoked where they should not have been stoked and its factors have been sleeping continuously, until today, where they should have woken up.

4. The dialectical hypothesis necessitates the position that the intellect and what follows from it, such as intellectual activity, are nothing but the fruit of man's struggle to raise his economic standard and develop the means of production, and therefore absolute truths are relative matters that have no existence in the shade of historical materialism and they are nothing more than traces of temporary, changing requirements.

If we presume that this speech is true, then it is a priori evidence that the dialectic is not an actual principle that contains all of history and covers all stages of humanity. Rather, it is just like all other claimed "truths", a relative matter that has no established reality.

And part of the contradiction that cannot be hidden from any reasonable person is that we say that the judgments of the intellect are not absolute, established truths. Then we rely on the judgments of the intellect itself in deriving what we claim is the greatest established truth, which contains all of human history.

The conclusion is that we pose this question: what is the cause of social development? The clear answer on the tongue of every researcher is that it is thought.

After that we have to ask: what is the factor behind the development of thought? Historical materialism answers this second question by simply saying that it is the economic factor embodied in the means of production, and thus the feeling of need for food and drink is what sets the first seeds of thought and intellect in motion.

And every reasonable person in the world must ask:

Why did the beasts and other predators fall behind their colleague 'man' in this phase, in which opportunities were equal, and were made to remain under the system of one principle? Why were the whips of the dialectic able to push man to where he has arrived today without these same whips being able to move all other animals even one hand span forward, and thus they do not enjoy any thinking, they do not have a language and no economy has flourished among them?

The thoroughly inevitable answer is that thought is an independent reality that came down to man from the Creator of man.

It is fruitless and in vain to look for the roots of thought or the factors behind it in the world of matter or the economy or the means of production⁽¹⁾.

* * *

This is the first path towards demonstrating the clearest and most significant universal reality, which is the reality of Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He. We have comprehensively shown, in a way that is harmonious with the nature of this book and the reader's nature, that the free, objective intellect would be in no need of arranging all these preludes, proofs and standards were there not

(1) If you want to know about the fairy tale of materialist thought in detail, refer to the author's book *Refuting the Illusions of Dialectical Materialism*.

intellects shackled in the chains of inclinations and tendencies that require them to cover their eyes and look away. Thus, they continue fabricating doubts and inventing problems. They make their heads oppose self-evident truths and dispute necessary facts, and this is how the issue of Allah's existence emerges among many groups under the guise of being the obscure scientific topic that is shrouded in doubt and so many problems.

This phenomenon that has entered certain intellects is what claims—as we said in the introduction—that the matter is very complex, that we accept the acting of actors and the fabrications of fabricators, that we assume a self-evident matter to be merely speculative and instinctive things to be intellectual enigmas. Thus, we address them in the same way and, as they say, we catch the liar behind the door.

On account of this, we will not limit ourselves to presenting this path that we have reached the end of. Instead, we shall go beyond it and onto the second path, which is the path that starts with the phase of the undisputable report, and it is what we call:

The Bottom Up Way

As I said to you, this second way starts with looking at a scientific issue in front of us such that when we have finished explaining it, another issue that is connected to it is disclosed to us. Then, when we look at that one and finish analysing it, a third issue is disclosed to us, until these issues gradually lead us to establishing the fact itself whose establishment was apparent to us before, and it is the fact of Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He.

Now we are in front of an extraordinary book called the Qur'ān, which has been transmitted to us over the centuries from a specific source. Therefore, we are in front of a reporting issue embodied in the image of this book, and we must begin by verifying it according to

the scientific method that is followed when verifying transmissions and reports.

Regarding verification, we know that this book has reached us (with a chain of transmission that is authentic and *mutawātir*, it is not possible that there is any lying in its narration) from a man called Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who emerged during the sixth century CE on the Arabian Peninsula. Likewise, we know, also by verifying it, that an authentic, *mutawātir* narration has established that he said that this book was not from his writing and that none of it came from him. Rather, he received it as revelation from Allah through the medium of Jibrīl, peace be upon him!

If we have finished verifying both of these reports, we find ourselves in front of another scientific issue, which is the phenomenon of this revelation that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has informed us of. What is its reality? What is the difference between it and psychical inspiration? To what extent is it rationally possible that this claim is a lie? This is another scientific issue that has nothing to do with transmission such that it can be verified by way of narration and chain of transmission, and it is not a material, tangible reality such that it can be verified by way of tangible experience and observation. Rather, it is a purely rational issue, and thus there is no way to verify it except by way of the two proofs of clear circumstantial evidence and primary, indisputable analogy based on thorough investigation.

When we verify the “phenomenon of revelation” based on this foundation, we are compelled to decisively confirm that revelation is not internal feelings that afflicted Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that he was not lying to people in what he said, that there was no one in his age hiding behind him and teaching him what he said was revelation from Allah, and that it is not possible that

it was whisperings from one of the jinn or a devil. We are compelled to decisively negate these possibilities based on circumstantial evidence, primary analogy and accurate, thorough investigation (and you know that the appropriate place to detail these proofs and present them will be under the discussion on prophecy, which is coming soon, if Allah so wills, and here we are just illustrating the steps of research, its stages and the gradual method of working up until we arrive at the conclusion that we will disclose).

When we have finished verifying revelation in this way, we find ourselves in front of the necessity to have faith in Allah’s existence, in conformity with what this Qur’ān itself says and in conformity with the supporting miracles, at the forefront of which is this book.

When we have finished with faith in Allah, we find ourselves in front of the necessity to have faith in everything that this book addresses us with by way of reports, commands, prohibitions and so forth.

And know that the researcher, by means of this second way, is compelled in the end to have firm conviction in Allah’s existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, as long as he gradually works his way up through these steps that we have concisely clarified, even if he does not think about any of the other proofs we presented when explaining the first way. That is because grasping indisputable premises with their known scientific conditions obligates the one grasping to have faith in their conclusion, because doubt in the conclusion alongside indisputable faith in the premise is inconceivable. If it were conceivable, it would be conceivable to gather two opposites in one place and one time.

However, when the researcher arrives at the decisive conclusion that obligates him to have faith in Allah, he finds other rational proofs in front of his mind making him acquire certainty on top of certainty, and both ways are an effective scientific method that cannot be approached by doubt or suspicion or have either circling around it.

Finally, if you see a sane person presented with all of these proofs and he remains fidgeting regarding them, doubting their conclusion, not having anything to refute them with but also being guided after them to any truth, despite having both thought and intellect, know that with this person you have another proof for the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

That is because when the intellect is left to itself, it must do its natural work of unveiling realities and arriving at conclusions by way of premises, and if there were no sublime creator of this intellect who has absolute power over its work and course, able to stop it from working whenever he wants and able to stop it from understanding the simplest of realities at any moment in time, the intellect of this person would not be incapable of understanding this clear, self-evident reality, especially after looking at its clear, indisputable proofs.

As for when this strange incapacity does happen, it does indeed verify the standard practice of Allah regarding His slave: He illuminates the path in front of the intellect whose possessor has not been too haughty to contemplate knowledge of the truth since the beginning of the path and has not given preference to following his desires over following the call of the intellect since the first stages of thought. He blocks the path in front of the intellect that has been haughty from the very beginning, as his own state and the things he says declare that he is not prepared to follow the truth that his desires have blocked him from and the means to which his passions have constricted him from. Thus, after that, you see him understanding every intricacy from the various affairs of life, until you place him in front of the clearest reality therein, which is the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. There you find him to be like a madman, Satan having afflicted him with insanity.

Look at how clear this meaning is in Allah the Exalted's statement: **"Who could do greater wrong than someone who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and then turns away from them, forgetting all that he has done before? We have placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. Though you call them to guidance, they will nonetheless never be guided"** [al-Kahf 18:57].

Indeed my dear reader, this phenomenon is one of the clearest proofs of Allah's existence!

* * *

2. The Attributes of Allah the Exalted

You have to know the comprehensive, concise maxim that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is described with all the attributes of perfection and He is transcendent above all the attributes of imperfection, as His divinity necessitates that He be described with absolute perfection, a necessity that is clear in a specific sense.

Then, after that, we must have detailed knowledge of the most important of these attributes, clarify what they mean and the matters and creedal doctrines that they necessitate. Allah the Exalted has described himself in his Noble Book with many different attributes, although the particulars of all these attributes fall under twenty main attributes that are established by indication of the Book and decisive proofs.

These attributes are divided into four categories, which are:

The personal attribute, the attributes of negation, the attributes of affirmation and the attributes of affirmed meaning

A. The Personal Attribute

What is meant is an immutable attribute whose description is used to indicate the essence without any additional meaning, such as the substance being a substance and it being something existent.

The personal attribute is one attribute and it is existence, which we have already discussed in sufficient detail, as the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has been established for you by way of the various aforementioned evidences. That is evidence of Him being described with this attribute, as it is, as we have said, nothing other than His essence, Glorified and Exalted is He.

Perfect existence and imperfect existence:

What you must know at this point is that existence falls into two categories: perfect existence and imperfect existence. To express it in another way, we could say essential existence and subordinate existence. As for the existence of Allah the Exalted, it is perfect, essential existence, meaning that He exists as His essence and not due to some cause that influences Him. One of the special characteristics of essential existence is that it does not accept non-existence. As for the existence of everything besides Him, it is imperfect, subordinate existence, meaning that their existence is provided by someone else and they are dependent on the One who brought them into existence. One of the special characteristics of this second kind of existence is that it must be between two states of non-existence: previous and subsequent.

Based on this, only Allah's existence is absolute, perfect, essential existence.

And the existence of everything besides Him is imperfect, subordinate existence.

It would not be appropriate for you to go beyond this limit in contemplating His existence, Glorified and Exalted is He, and the existence of the possible things besides Him, or to delve into contemplating the difference between the essence and existence, because with this contemplation you have no equipment in terms of scientific research and its method, you have no indisputable reports or transmission, you do not have the evidence of experience and observation, or circumstantial evidence, analogy or investigation. All you have in your capacity is guesswork and imagination with which to row your boat in the open sea as endless waves clash against each other. If you did that, it would be appropriate for you either to fall into the confusion that some of the philosophers (the existentialists) fell into or the delusion that some of the Sufis were swept away with.

Those people have claimed that the reality of Allah is an expression of existence that is stripped of the essence that occupies it and fills it. In other words, if we ask about this existence: what is it the existence of? The answer is that nothing exists apart from His essence.

As for these people, they have ended up at the delusion that the reality of Allah is the existence of the universe itself, and thus these beings that you see all around you are actually nothing more than the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, embodied in these forms and shapes!

Thus, look at what imagination and contemplation do when they are far removed from the capacity of the intellect and its method.

Those people have imagined that the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is an empty vessel containing nothing but its name "existence"! And these people imagine that it is a vessel filled with all the categories of beings and creatures that you can see.

As for the intellect, with all the equipment that it has along with the proofs and methods of research, it says, 'What has been established by indisputable proof, of which there is no doubt, is that the existence of all these possibilities depends on the essence that exists by necessity and is described with all the attributes of perfection and is far removed from the attributes of imperfection. Thus, it is imperative to have faith in this Sublime Essence that plans the affair of this entire universe and by necessity it is separate from the universe and independent of it.'

However, what is the relationship between the essence and existence? What is the difference between the two?

The intellect answers by saying, 'This has nothing to do with me, because it is outside the grasp of my understanding and my mandate. May Allah have mercy on the person who knows his limit and stops there'⁽¹⁾.

(1) Do not let what we are saying induce you to imitate certain people and declare as disbelievers those who are known for the position of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("the unity of existence"), such as al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī and others.

B. The Attributes of Negation

They are every attribute whose meaning is the absence of something that does not befit Allah the Glorified. These attributes have many particulars because every imperfection is only negated by its opposite, and imperfections are of many shapes and types. However, there are five attributes that are the foundations of all the attributes of

Indeed those whose books indicate that they held the position of *waḥdat al-wujūd* may very well be innocent of this doctrine, and that it was slipped into their books by some *zanādiqah* [atheists or those who believe the universe is eternal or those who manifest faith while concealing disbelief] who used to practice this treachery. It is also possible that a state of spiritual ecstasy gripped them and thus they deviated from the norm and articulated what they did not believe, and maybe they did believe it but then went back on it afterwards. All of these possibilities are there, and therefore it is oppression against truth and justice to ignore all of them and cling to another possibility that allows us to declare them disbelievers.

It is known that if you were to spend your entire life without ever calling a disbeliever whose disbelief was certain a disbeliever (*kāfir*), Allah would not take you to task for that on the Day of Standing, and that if just once in your life you were to accuse of disbelief someone who is not a disbeliever in the sight of Allah, you would make yourself liable for immense punishment from Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

Therefore, what necessitates that labels of disbelief be distributed amongst those who were known, throughout their lives, for Islam and consciousness of Allah, and that was what spread amongst people about them, and we do not know how they returned to Allah, may His majesty be manifest? It suffices in explaining the ruling and warning people against imitating that we clarify the truth for them and refute falsehood and we warn them against following it, regardless of who says it. This suffices you in fulfilling the trust of knowledge and the religion and it suffices the people in becoming aware of the truth. Allah has not made you responsible for anything beyond that.

And it is within your capacity, as it was for the great scholars before, to explain the unlawfulness of reading these books that contain these kinds of unbridled fantasies, such as *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn, and that people must avoid them without rushing to declare any one of them a disbeliever.

negation and which spare us having to mention the many particulars besides them. Let us begin by mentioning these five attributes and explaining them.

1. Oneness: It is meaning is negate imagining quantity in His essence and His attributes, Glorified and Exalted is He, regardless of whether it is attached quantity or detached quantity. In other words, He, Glorified and Exalted, is not made up of constituent parts nor is He comprised of particulars, and the same goes for His attributes. For example, He, Glorified and Exalted, does not have two knowledges or two powers, such that each one supplements the other. This is negating them having parts. Also, no one besides Him, Glorified and Exalted, has knowledge like His knowledge or power like His power, and this is negating them from having particulars.

A part of something is that which the thing is comprised of along with other parts such that it would not be valid to use the name of that thing until it has been completed by all the other parts, such as the wall of a room, the cover of a book or the hand of a person. The name of the whole applies to all the parts after their coordination and completion. Thus, the room is a whole and one wall is a part of it.

A particular is that which is classified under the species or type in terms of numbers and individuals, such that it would be valid to apply that species or type to each and every single individual within that species or type. For example, man is the name of a type of animal under which are classified many numbers and individuals. It is known that just as the name man applies to the type in its entirety, it also applies to the single individual classified under it. Thus, we say that so-and-so from amongst the people is a man, and the name of the total applies to the general type or species.

This is how we know that the part is the opposite of the whole and the particular is the opposite of the total.

What is meant by Allah's Oneness is that you know that He, Glorified and Exalted, is neither a whole made of up parts nor a total comprised of particulars.

The comprehensive evidence for this is the Exalted's statement: **"Say, 'He is Allah, Absolute Oneness.'"**⁽¹⁾ By attributing the attribute of Oneness to Allah, the verse has negated both the attributes of whole and total from Him.

As for the rational proof for negating both of them, i.e. that He the Glorified is not a whole that can be broken down into parts or a total under which are classified numbers and individuals, it is the following:

First of all, if it were correct that He, Glorified and Exalted, were a whole made up of constituent parts, that would necessitate that He be incapable by Himself and in need of other than Him, and that in turn would make him resemble temporal beings, which is false with regards to Allah, as you know.

Secondly, if it were correct that He, Glorified and Exalted, were a total comprised of individuals, that would allow for the possibility of there being resistance between them in terms of will and creation, such that one of them would want to bring something into existence and another would want to take it out of existence. At that point, either both would take place, which would be the coming together of opposites, which is impossible, or one of the two would take place and thus the incapacity of the other would be manifest, and that negates divinity. Or, they would clash and the incapacity of both of them would be manifest. As long as the occurrence of this resistance is possible, the attribute of perfection for both of them becomes unnecessary. Allah mentioned this proof in a simplified manner when He said, **"If there had been gods besides Allah in heaven or on earth, they would both have been ruined..."** [al-Anbiyā' 21:22].

(1) (tn): Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ 112:1.

2. Pre-eternality: This means that He, Glorified and Exalted, has no beginning:

The evidence of this attribute being established for Him, Glorified is He, is the Exalted's statement: **"He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward"** [al-Ḥadīd 57:3], and if He had been preceded by non-existence then that would necessitate an influencer bringing Him into existence, and it would be impossible for Him to be a deity in that case. At that point, the true god would have to be the one that preceded Him and brought Him into existence, and thus he would be the pre-eternal one, and this is what we are seeking to explain. Or, if this previous deity were also preceded by non-existence and there was something else in existence that influenced it and brought it into existence, and so forth, this would necessitate the presumption of infinite regression, and this is false based on the scientific proof that we have already presented and explained.

Therefore, all existent beings must rely, for their existence, on the essence that exists by necessity, and this essence that exists by necessity must influence other than it and not be influenced by anything besides it. This necessitates that it be attributed pre-eternality.

This is a clear, scientific proof which the intellect cannot contest. It must decisively affirm it.

However, after that, the intellect is incapable of conceiving this pre-eternality and digesting it in terms of its details and how it is. On account of this, you see some superficial people contriving within themselves the question: who created Allah?

The source of this question, as I have told you, is that the imagination of the questioner cannot digest the manner of pre-eternality and its meaning in relation to Allah the Exalted's essence. As long as man constantly desires to conceive and perceive every reality that he comes across then he will continue to think about this question.

However, the difficulty is removed by clarifying this following reality:

All man's perceptive faculties are the product of his conceptions, and these conceptions gather in the mind by way of the five senses. This means that man cannot comprehend abstract matters unless he has tangible standards and models in his mind. Thus, it is impossible for man to conceive and comprehend that which has no prior standard or model.

Based on this analogy, it is easy for you to understand the attribute of mercy with regards to Allah the Exalted's essence because you retain in your mind conceptions of its meanings and effects. It is easy for you to conceive of Him having the attributes of justice, majesty and generosity, and that He is severe in punishment, because of all of them go back to meanings for which there are illustrations in your mind, even though these attributes are different with regards to Allah the Exalted's essence from how they are with regards to the essences of created beings. If it is said to you that He is not confined by a place or a time, this is something you cannot comprehend because in your mind you do not retain any meaning or illustration of this attribute, because it is an attribute that is exclusive to the Exalted's essence. Likewise, if it is said to you that He, Glorified and Exalted, is pre-eternal and has no beginning, you go and imagine the illustration of not having a beginning and you are not able to imagine or conceive it. It is a meaning that surprises your imagination as it has never seen its reality or experienced it. Therefore, your imagination has no desire to digest this meaning.

However, it is very easy for you, and you have grasped this reality and believed in it by way of the scientific proof that we have mentioned, to be absolutely certain and have firm conviction of it without waiting for the possibility of you conceiving it, because it is easy for you to understand that your intellect has not grasped all

the realities of existence and that your thinking has not registered all of its forms and shapes. In this regard, the philosophers, and researcher and intelligent people in general, say, 'The lack of finding something does not necessitate that the thing does not actually exist.' The intellect only comprehends by means of the five senses, and the five senses sense within a limited scope and up to a limited distance, so does that mean that there is nothingness beyond this limit?

Never-ending, continuous existence cannot be grasped, and that is for no other reason than the fact that the mental capacity in man is limited and comes to an end.

However, that does not mean that the intellect decisively affirms that it is impossible, for sometimes the intellect can comprehend something being possible or existing and at the same time it is incapable of conceiving it and grasping its true nature.

3. Everlastingness: This means that it is impossible to attach non-existence to His essence, Glorified and Exalted is He, and its transmitted evidence is the same verse that contains the evidence for pre-eternality, which is the Exalted's statement: **"He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward"** [al-Ḥadīd 57:3] And it is said that its rational evidence is what we said regarding the evidence for pre-eternality. Just as the existence of something influencing He who exists by necessity and bringing Him into existence is inconceivable, it is inconceivable that there would be something influencing Him and taking Him out of existence.

Likewise, this attribute can be understood in the same way that we understand the attribute of pre-eternality, as neither attribute has a standard within the imagination, even though the intellect has evidence of it being firmly established. It is impossible for the intellect to be able to conceive either of them and understand their reality even though the intellect, at the same, time, decisively affirms that they are established. This is how you know that the intellect's

inability to conceive something is not evidence of its absolute non-existence, as it is clear and known.

4. Self-subsistence: In other words, He the Exalted does not need a creator to bring Him into existence nor a location in which to reside, for Allah the Exalted was before the existence of anything and before the existence of time (i.e. celestial bodies that determine the course of time) and place. The evidence for this attribute being established for Allah the Exalted, in addition to the clear rational proof, is the Exalted's statement: "Allah, the Everlasting Sustainer of all"⁽¹⁾, i.e. the One who does not need anything and everything needs Him.

And know that there is no scope for the intellect to hesitate in affirming this attribute for Allah the Exalted after knowing that He exists by necessity, that He is pre-eternal and that He is not influenced by anything and everything is influenced by Him.

If you say, 'How do I understand that Allah does not have a place when what I know is that there is nothing in existence except that it occupies some place?', the answer is that you have derived this knowledge of yours from examining the circumstances of bodies and temporal beings. The attributes that apply to possible things and temporal beings do not have to also apply to the One who exists by necessity. If you were to go and make an analogy it would be an analogy that has no proof, as there is no general cause between the root and the branch. Rather, the intellect obligates that the One who exists by necessity be different from possible beings in all of those matters.

After knowing this, it does not harm you that you are unable to imagine in your mind Him, Glorified and Exalted, not being confined within a place, because you have learned that the intellect is nothing more than a mirror in which are established illustrations of visible

(1) (tn): Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ 112:2.

things that your senses have come across. This is from that which your senses have not come across, so how can you imagine it and conceive it?

Furthermore, if a place were established for Allah in which He was bound, and it were possible for you to imagine Him in that place of His, your intellect would be more encompassing of things than the encompassing of their Creator, and that would indicate the lack of His divinity. Thus, it is therefore natural for the intellect to be absolutely certain and not imagine. Rather, it is bewildered and ignorant.

To be bewildered when trying to imagine the Divine Essence is not so different from being bewildered by your intellect, your spirit and the energy that Allah the Exalted has made a secret upon which the existence of most of what you see around you is based. Where is the location of the intellect or the spirit in your body, and where is the dwelling place of the life that is in living things and what is its reality? Neither you nor anyone else knows the answer, and despite that everyone is certain that the intellect, the spirit and life exist.

Bewilderment in the face of these matters is a necessity that is the result of the intellect being limited by limits that the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, wanted, so how can a created being not be bewildered when attempting to analyse and conceive His creator? On account of this, bewilderment—after faith in Him and His attributes, Glorified and Exalted is He—is the highest degree of faith, for it suffices you to be certain of His existence and bewildered when it comes to understanding Him and conceiving Him.

This is the reality of the 'faith in the unseen' that Allah has commanded His slaves to have, which is that they believe in what is concealed from their senses and their intellects in terms of defining and qualifying this unseen. Based on this, the virtue of the believer over the atheist is established. As for if the cover were removed and the veil were lifted and the unseen became present and observed,

there would be no virtue for the believer over the disbeliever, as one of the most important elements of legal responsibility would be abolished.

5. Non-resemblance to temporal beings: This means that there is nothing comparable to him, may His majesty be manifest. He, Glorified and Exalted, is not a mass and not a contingent and He is not a total or a particular, as has been clarified. This is why He is transcendent above what these attributes also necessitate, i.e. the various attributes, circumstances and minor impediments that affect man and other beings, such as sleep, heedlessness, hunger, thirst, need, physical and psychical impediments, and so forth.

The proof for this attribute of Allah the Exalted has been established by both rational and transmitted evidence. As for the rational evidence, it is a necessity that is clear in a specific sense, as divinity necessitates remoteness from all imperfections, and amongst the most obvious manifestations of imperfection are those attributes that temporal beings possess which, in reality, are nothing but the result of them being temporal and them needing the One who brings them into existence and the One who specifies them. As for the transmitted evidence, it is the Exalted's statement: **"Nothing is like him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing"** [al-Shūrā 42:11]. The insertion of the letter *kāf* for resemblance upon the word *mithl* [i.e. like] is hyperbole in negating resemblance and likeness from Allah the Exalted.⁽¹⁾ There is also His statement, may His majesty be manifest: "And no one is comparable to Him."⁽²⁾ Being comparable and being like are one and the same.

Once you know this, you can ask, 'But we see that there are many attributes that man (and he is a temporal being) shares with Allah, may His majesty be manifest, such as the attributes of knowledge,

(1) (tn): this is referring to the original Arabic verse.

(2) (tn): Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ 112:4.

power, will, hearing, seeing and so forth, and this contradicts what has been established about Him not resembling temporal beings'.

The answer is that man is described with two groups of attributes. The first are the attributes that are actually the fruit of the temporality and created nature that is established in him, such as being confined within space and time, having various physical and psychical needs, having the impediments of incapacity and weakness and the manifestations of temper; these attributes emanate from one whose being is distinguished by temporality.

The second group are attributes that are actually attributes of Allah, may His majesty be manifest, but He, Glorified and Exalted, has granted man some very tiny surpluses from them, to enable him, by means of them, to carry out the legal responsibilities that he has been created for and to make it feasible for him to subjugate the phenomena of the universe around him and benefit from them, as was clarified in the second preface to this book, such as knowledge, power, will, comprehension and the life. These attributes do not emanate from him being distinguished by temporality. Rather, they are not from that at all and they are absolutely not from his peculiar characteristics.

To phrase it differently, we can say that the tiny portion of these attributes that man enjoys does not mean that he is a partner with Allah in them, for two reasons:

First of all, they are essential attributes with regards to Allah and with regards to man they are accidental attributes, as in reality they are nothing more than divine surpluses that have been granted to him. It is preposterous that this meaning would necessitate a partnership of man with Allah in any of them.

Secondly, they differ from Allah the Exalted's attributes in reality and essence. The only thing they have in common is the name. Were it not for terminology that is exclusive to man being applied beyond

its normal scope, it would not be sound to have the name in common either, for what is the value of the knowledge that man is ascribed with compared with Allah the Exalted's knowledge? What is the value of the power that man enjoys compared to Allah's power and the sublimity of His authority?

In summary, it is obvious that negating resemblance of Allah the Exalted to temporal beings means negating resemblance in the attributes that are necessitated by temporality and its particular qualities. As for the other attributes, which are the requisites of the Lord, may His majesty be manifest, He, Glorified and Exalted, has granted some of His creatures, such as man, traces or shadows of them, and thus they are not included in the generality of this negation.

C. The Attributes of Affirmation and the Attributes of Affirmed Meaning

We start with the attributes of affirmation and we say:

They are every attribute that is established for His essence, Glorified and Exalted is He, and necessitate a specific ruling for Him, such as the attribute of knowledge, for example, for it necessitates that He be described as all-knowing. Allah the Exalted's attributes of perfection are several but they are gathered in seven main attributes the detailed evidence for which is from the Book⁽¹⁾.

(1) This issue is something in which the Mu'tazilah differed with the vast majority of Muslims, who are known as *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, for they denied the existence of these attributes of affirmation and adopted the position that Allah the Exalted is knowing without being attributed something called knowledge, and He is powerful without being ascribed an attribute called power.

What makes them draw this conclusion is that they imagine that ascribing this essential attribute to Allah the Exalted necessitates a plurality of pre-eternal beings according to the plurality of these attributes, and it is a doctrine that is disbelief by consensus. They said that His knowing and ability to use power

is necessary for Him, Exalted is He, and because they exist He does not need knowledge and power, as is the case with us. They said that Allah is perfect in His essence, and therefore if we say that His knowing is established by means of the attribute of knowledge therein, this would mean that He is imperfect in His essence and perfected by means of something else, and this is false by consensus. (see *al-Mawāqif*: 2/346).

All of these are delusions embodied in the view of the Mu'tazilah, and are the result of making the intellect bear more than its capacity in these issues. This is their method that they are known for. What is impossible in the plurality of pre-eternal beings is that there be a plurality of pre-eternal essences, not that there be a plurality of attributes for one essence. 'His knowing' is nothing more than the ascription of the attribute of knowledge itself to Allah, and thus there is no one in need and nothing needed. This is how you also know that ascribing the attribute of knowledge to Him the Exalted does not mean that He is perfected by other than Him.

It suffices as proof in this regard that Allah the Exalted ascribed the attribute of knowledge to His essence when He said: "...but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills..." [al-Baqarah 2:255], and it is natural for the intellect to decisively affirm that an analogy can be made from this attribute for all the other attributes, and thus He is ascribed the attributes of life, power, hearing, seeing etc.

Using this verse as evidence is established, even if we were to interpret 'knowledge' therein as 'what is known'—and it is an interpretation that is not necessary—for if knowledge were not established for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, the Producer, Exalted is He, would not have ascribed it to Himself and would not have expressed it instead of what is known. Thus, expressing knowledge instead of what is known is a branch with regards to the validity of attributing knowledge to Him, Exalted is He.

We did not want to go into this controversy that the Mu'tazilah stirred up in the main part of the book, sufficing ourselves with this brief mention, because we have taken it upon ourselves not to subject ourselves to any of these debates and arguments for which we have no need to delve into after the Mu'tazilah have died out and their specious arguments have been buried and the proofs of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, based on both the logic of sound intellect, the texts of the Book and the Sunnah and man's pure, natural disposition, have been made clear to us. Nevertheless, the strongest of proofs that confirms that the truth is on their side is that from the age of the Companions until today they have made up the vast majority (*al-sawād al-ʿaḏim*) of Muslims and

Furthermore, knowing these attributes in particular has another importance, for from knowing and knowing the necessity to have faith in them emanates important realities that one must have faith in and be firmly convinced of, such as those realities that are connected to man's direction and choice, Allah's decree and predestination and the effect of causation and its absence with regards to His actions, Glorified and Exalted is He.

In explaining these attributes, we will follow this path:

1. Mentioning the attributes of affirmation, what each of them means and their evidence
2. Mentioning the attributes of affirmed meaning and what each of them means
3. Clarifying what these attributes are connected to

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1. Mentioning the attributes of affirmation, elucidating what each of them means and their evidence

1. Knowledge: This is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, with which matters are unveiled and encompassed as they actually are or as they will be in the future.

Upon contemplating this definition, you will know that it is not the affair of this attribute to specify possible matter or to influence some aspect therein. Rather, its affair is merely unveiling and cognizance, regardless of whether it is connected to a reality that has emerged in existence or something unseen that is still in the depths of non-existence.

their scholars, and they are the ones whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, commanded to be followed in several authentic ḥadīths that reach the level of mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*) in meaning [(tn): i.e. as opposed to exact wording].

The evidence for this attribute is several verses in Allah the Exalted's Book, such as the Exalted's statement: "**Allah has knowledge of all things**" [at-Tawbah 9:115].

2. Will: This is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, and its affair includes specifying possible matters and what can become of them, such as existence and non-existence and adaptation regardless of any external influencer.

Will being divided into suitability (*ṣulūḥiyyah*) and execution (*tanjīziyyah*):

Then you will have noticed that this attribute, since it is a pre-eternal meaning established for His essence, is suitable for specifying possible matters, and that is the will of suitability. You will have also noticed its actual attachment to something that has been willed, and that is the will of execution. Nevertheless, it is one will and pre-eternal. The difference is in whether a connection is expressed or not.

Perhaps you will ask: how can the Divine Will being attached to possible matters also be pre-eternal, such as the general will of suitability, while at the same time we call it the will of execution?

The answer is that the Divine Will being attached to bring something into existence or taking it out of existence is pre-eternal and cannot possibly be temporal. If that were the case, one of its necessities would be that Allah would not know some of what He wants to create and do in the future, which is impossible based on what we have already clarified. Therefore its opposite is established, which is that Allah knows in pre-eternity what He is going to do and create at the appropriate moment and time. This means, self-evidently, that Allah's will of execution is accompanied by this pre-eternal knowledge of His.

What remains is for you to know that any obscurity when thinking about this goes back to the word 'execution', as you would imagine its

meaning to be creation and emergence and it is something decisively temporal. However, this is only correct with regard to power, which we will talk about. As for execution with regards to will, it is simply its attachment to some possible matter regardless of whether this possible matter has emerged in the phase of existence or has not yet emerged. Man's will could be connected to some action and then he delays implementing it until several years later; this will of his is called the will of execution. In other words, it is not just a capability but rather an effective turning of attention towards something that is specifically willed.

The rational evidence for this attribute is also clear necessity, because if it were not present and pre-eternal in Him, Glorified and Exalted is He, its opposite would thus be necessary, which is compulsion, and it would necessitate that He be compelled, which contradicts existing by necessity and the meaning of divinity.

Its transmitted evidence is several verses, such as the Exalted's statement: **"If Allah wills misguidance for someone, you cannot help him against Allah in any way"** [al-Mā'idah 5:41] and His statement: **"When Allah wills evil for a people, there is no averting it. They have no protector apart from Him"** [ar-Ra'd 13:11].

Then you must know that will and command are two distinct, separate matters. There is nothing necessitated between the two, as one might imagine, according to what has been verified by Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. We promise you that we will explain this distinction and clarify it when discussing the creedal realities that result from knowing these attributes.

3. Power: This is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, with which every possible matter is brought into existence, taken out of existence and formed and shaped. Then, if you notice that this attribute, being a pre-eternal meaning that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, is suitable for bringing

possible matters into existence, taking them out of existence and forming and shaping them, regardless of implementation, then that is the power that is attached to things in terms of suitability only. If you notice the implementation of things being brought into existence and taken out of existence or actual forming and shaping, that is the Divine Power when it is attached in terms of execution.

And with that you will know that power is also one. If you look at its attachment in terms of suitability, it is a pre-eternal attachment, and if you look at its attached in terms of execution, it is a temporal attachment. In other words, both attachments go back to one power. The temporal is only the attachment to things in terms of execution. As for the power itself, it is pre-eternal in any case.

4. Hearing: This is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, and it is attached to things that are heard, or things in existence. It comprehends with full comprehension, not by way of imagination and not by way of a sense's influence or the arrival of air.

5. Sight: This is also a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, and it is attached to things that are seen, or things in existence. It comprehends with full comprehension, not by way of imagination and not by way of a sense being influenced or the arrival of rays⁽¹⁾.

Know that He, may His majesty be manifest, being described with these two attributes is derived from the established and decisive transmitted evidence that is found in the Book and the Sunnah, such that an intelligent person cannot deny them or interpret them away.

Sticking to the transmitted evidence in this regard is what has prevented us from attributing to Him, Glorified and Exalted is He, the attributes of taste, smell and touch, as there is no transmitted

(1) In defining these two attributes we have relied on the commentary of 'Abd al-Salām on *Jawharat al-Tawhīd*, *Ithāf al-Murīd*, p.107 and 109.

evidence that affirms them by way of a sense or instrument, as is the case for man and animals.

Furthermore, the scholars have differed over what these two attributes cover. Some of them have said, such as al-Bājūrī and al-Sanūsī, that they cover all of existence with each of them having a different meaning. In other words, His hearing, Exalted is He, is attached to that which can be heard by us as well as all the other existent things that cannot be heard, and the same goes for His sight, Exalted is He. Some have said, such as Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftanāzānī, may Allah have mercy on him, that the attribute of hearing is attached to that which is heard and the attribute of sight is attached to that which is seen.

What we should arrive at in this regard is faith in the establishment of these two attributes for Him, Glorified and Exalted is He, in accordance with how He has described Himself. Then there is the faith that each attribute has its own separate function, for if not, He the Exalted attributing each one to Himself separately would have no meaning other than repetition, which is impossible in this situation.

As for the reality of both these attributes and what they cover, and whether each of them has a specific function that is attached to some things in existence, as is the case for us, or whether they are in relation to Him, may His majesty be manifest, responsible for other, more comprehensive and more general function—we consign the knowledge of that to Allah, may His majesty be manifest, and this suffices us with matters like this for which the intellect has no inroad to affirm or deny other than relying on indisputable transmission and decisive texts. It suffices us to stop where these texts deem it necessary, and this is the way of the First Three Generations, may Allah have mercy on them, in understanding the realities of the Islamic creed.

6. Speech: This is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, with which He commands, forbids and

informs and it is expressed through the composition that He revealed to His Messengers, such as the Qur'ān, the Torah and the Injīl.

As for the evidence that establishes this attribute for Allah the Exalted, it is the decisive, affirmed texts in both the Book and the Sunnah, such as the Exalted's statement: **"And Allah spoke directly to Mūsā"** [al-Nisā' 4:164] and His statement, may His majesty be manifest: **"If any of the idolaters ask you for protection, give them protection so that they hear the speech of Allah. Then convey them to a safe place"** [al-Tawbah 9:6] There is also what has been established in the authentic ḥadīth about the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, addressing his Lord, may His majesty be manifest, on the Night of the Ascension, when he was given the five daily prayers as an obligation.

As for verifying its meaning, know that 'speech' (*kalām*) in the Arabic language refers to two things:

The first is words that express the meaning that is within oneself, such as you saying, 'this is eloquent speech' and 'this is clear speech'.

The second is the meaning that is within oneself that is normally expressed in words, regarding which al-Akḥṭal said,

Indeed the speech is in the heart and Allah

Only made the tongue an indicator of the heart

Likewise, there is the statement of 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him: 'I have made a statement within myself', i.e. I have created and prepared speech, and you often say to your companion, 'I have some words (*kalām*) inside me that I want to mention to you'.

The essence of the disagreement between the Mu'tazilah and Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah:

Once you know this, then you must know that speech is established for Allah the Exalted by consensus of the Ummah. It has been mass transmitted from the Prophets, upon them be blessings and peace,

that He, Glorified and Exalted, speaks and it is decisively impossible to speak without establishing the attribute of speech. This is the extent of the consensus that no Muslim disagrees with⁽¹⁾.

Then the Mu'tazilah interpreted what the Muslims had agreed upon, i.e. affirming speech for Allah the Exalted, by saying that it is sounds and letters that Allah creates in that which is besides Him, such as the Preserved Tablet⁽²⁾ and Jibrīl, and it is known that it is temporal and not pre-eternal. Then they did not affirm anything else for Allah the Exalted beyond these sounds and letters under the name: speech.

As for the majority of Muslims, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, they say, 'We do not deny what the Mu'tazilah have said. Rather, we say it as well and we call it articulated speech and we all agree that it is temporal and that it is not established for His essence, Exalted is He, on account of it being temporal. However, we affirm a matter beyond that, which is the attribute that is established in the self and which is expressed in words and it is other than the reality of knowledge and other than will. Rather, it is a designated attribute, because with it others are addressed by way of commands or prohibitions or the conveying of information, it is indicated by words and it is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He. By necessity, it is impossible for thoughts and notions to occur to it, as is the case with man. This is what is meant by attributing speech to Allah the Exalted and this is how it is understood according to what the Muslims have agreed upon⁽³⁾.

This is where the Mu'tazilah split from the majority, as they did not attribute to Allah the Exalted a pre-eternal attribute with this

(1) See Sa'd's commentary on *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* and the supercommentary on it by 'Iṣām, p.288.

(2) Ar. *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*.

(3) See *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*: 2/261.

meaning called speech or personal speech (*al-kalām al-naḥsī*). They said, 'What the expressions indicate, what you have called personal speech, actually goes back to the attribute of knowledge when what is indicated is information, and it goes back to the attribute of will when it is a command or a prohibition⁽¹⁾ (and you know that they see will and command as having the same meaning). As for the expressions themselves, they are temporal, created words from Allah, as we have all agreed. They are not an attribute of Allah the Exalted but rather they are one of his creations, and speech is nothing other than an expression of this.

If you reflect on what we have mentioned, you will realise the point of difference between the Mu'tazilah and Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, which is that there is a meaning of the words of the Qur'ān, it comprises commands, prohibitions, and information directed at humanity and it is pre-eternal. So what is the name of this meaning?

The Mu'tazilah: Its name is knowledge if it is information and will if it is a command or prohibition.

The majority: Its name is personal speech and it is a separate attribute to knowledge and will, established for His essence, Exalted is He.

As for the speech that is words, they agreed that it is created and that it is not established for His essence, Glorified is He, with the exception of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and some of his followers, for they went with the position that these letters and sounds are also pre-eternal in and of themselves and that they are what is meant by the attribute of speech⁽²⁾.

(1) *ibid.* 2/362.

(2) This is the stated position of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his treatise *al-Radd 'alā al-Zanādiqah*, which is an extended, printed treatise included within the collection of large treatises of Ibn Taymiyyah. See the book *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī al-Islām* by Dr al-Nashār: 1/253 onwards.

that He, Glorified and Exalted, speaks and it is decisively impossible to speak without establishing the attribute of speech. This is the extent of the consensus that no Muslim disagrees with⁽¹⁾.

Then the Mu'tazilah interpreted what the Muslims had agreed upon, i.e. affirming speech for Allah the Exalted, by saying that it is sounds and letters that Allah creates in that which is besides Him, such as the Preserved Tablet⁽²⁾ and Jibrīl, and it is known that it is temporal and not pre-eternal. Then they did not affirm anything else for Allah the Exalted beyond these sounds and letters under the name: speech.

As for the majority of Muslims, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, they say, 'We do not deny what the Mu'tazilah have said. Rather, we say it as well and we call it articulated speech and we all agree that it is temporal and that it is not established for His essence, Exalted is He, on account of it being temporal. However, we affirm a matter beyond that, which is the attribute that is established in the self and which is expressed in words and it is other than the reality of knowledge and other than will. Rather, it is a designated attribute, because with it others are addressed by way of commands or prohibitions or the conveying of information, it is indicated by words and it is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He. By necessity, it is impossible for thoughts and notions to occur to it, as is the case with man. This is what is meant by attributing speech to Allah the Exalted and this is how it is understood according to what the Muslims have agreed upon⁽³⁾.

This is where the Mu'tazilah split from the majority, as they did not attribute to Allah the Exalted a pre-eternal attribute with this

(1) See Sa'd's commentary on *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* and the supercommentary on it by 'Iṣām, p.288.

(2) Ar. *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*.

(3) See *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*: 2/261.

meaning called speech or personal speech (*al-kalām al-nafsī*). They said, 'What the expressions indicate, what you have called personal speech, actually goes back to the attribute of knowledge when what is indicated is information, and it goes back to the attribute of will when it is a command or a prohibition⁽¹⁾ (and you know that they see will and command as having the same meaning). As for the expressions themselves, they are temporal, created words from Allah, as we have all agreed. They are not an attribute of Allah the Exalted but rather they are one of his creations, and speech is nothing other than an expression of this.

If you reflect on what we have mentioned, you will realise the point of difference between the Mu'tazilah and Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, which is that there is a meaning of the words of the Qur'ān, it comprises commands, prohibitions, and information directed at humanity and it is pre-eternal. So what is the name of this meaning?

The Mu'tazilah: Its name is knowledge if it is information and will if it is a command or prohibition.

The majority: Its name is personal speech and it is a separate attribute to knowledge and will, established for His essence, Exalted is He.

As for the speech that is words, they agreed that it is created and that it is not established for His essence, Glorified is He, with the exception of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and some of his followers, for they went with the position that these letters and sounds are also pre-eternal in and of themselves and that they are what is meant by the attribute of speech⁽²⁾.

(1) *ibid.* 2/362.

(2) This is the stated position of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his treatise *al-Radd 'alā al-Zanādiqah*, which is an extended, printed treatise included within the collection of large treaties of Ibn Taymiyyah. See the book *Nash'at al-Fikr al-Falsafī fī al-Islām* by Dr al-Nashār: 1/253 onwards.

We will not—after you know the points of agreement and disagreement—go into any of the discussion or debate that has revolved around this issue, due to our conviction that the situation is simpler than that, even though we are convinced of the position of the majority of Muslims, which is that the meaning of what the expressions indicate is called personal speech and that it is a separate attribute to the attributes of knowledge and will, and yet the Mu'tazilah agree with the majority in affirming this meaning for Allah the Exalted and that it is a pre-eternal attribute established for His essence, even though they do not call it speech, which is what we do. Most of the solemn echoes that you hear from the historical dispute over this issue originate from the dispute between Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may Allah be pleased with him, and the other cults, such as the Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah.

The crusader plot to exploit this issue:

Know that it is perfectly within our capacity to suffice ourselves in this regard by presenting what the majority of Muslims, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, know for a certainty, based on the Book and the Sunnah and the requirements of sound intellect, without turning to the opinion of the Mu'tazilah therein and mentioning the reasons for this dispute. We say that it would be perfectly within our capacity to do that were it not for the orientalist and evangelical plot delving into this issue in a strange and false way, hoping to leave any confusion in the mind of any party or group of Muslims in any way, shape or form.

The origin of the dispute over the Qur'ān and whether it is created speech or uncreated, is (according to the evangelical and orientalist treatment of the subject), a debate that existed between the Muslims and the Church, and the basis for that was what circled around a discussion about 'His Word' in the Exalted's statement: **"The Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, was only the Messenger of Allah**

and His Word" [an-Nisā' 4:171]. The Christians would remonstrate with the Muslims and said, 'Who is the Messiah?'—he is the Word of Allah, so is this word created or uncreated? If it is uncreated then the Messiah is Allah. If it is created then before his birth there was no one who had a word and a spirit, and therefore this must be the cause of the dispute that happened regarding whether the Qur'ān is to be considered created or temporal⁽¹⁾.

Do not wait for me to give you the evidence for this dangerous claim, its source or its chain of transmission. The sciences of the orientlists and evangelicals, especially in issues like this, are far removed from being attached to any evidence and far above being subjected to any method of scientific research, or at best the method of anticipation, guesswork and spite.

It suffices as proof of a historical event that it should be affirmed by and based on principles and facts. I do not know why people would not believe me if I also subjugated myself to this method and said, 'I can see black, overcast clouds in the north. Right now, there must be massive rainfall over there causing floods that are sweeping away many people or lots of property!

As for the men of the Church remonstrating with Muslim scholars with this absurd statement, it is not far-fetched, even though we would not affirm it from a scientific angle unless it had been transmitted to us with an authentic chain of transmission that gives us certainty⁽²⁾.

(1) See *The Philosophy of Religious Thought between Islam and Christianity* by Louis Ghardiah and George Qanwātī 1/62.

(2) We say this because we know that amongst the men of the Church, in both ancient and modern times, there are those who attempt to debate with the Muslims regarding the pre-eternality of 'Īsā, peace be upon him, with this word. It has come from John Damascene that he would instruct some Christians what to say in debates with Muslims in order to corrupt their beliefs. He would say, 'If an Arab asks you, "What do you say about the Messiah?" say, "He is the Word of Allah"...' etc. However, no one said that amongst the Muslims are

As for the scholars of the Muslims, they were at a loss in the face of this speech, and thus they murmured amongst themselves and felt baffled, until the matter required that they give vent to their bafflement and thus they disputed about the Qur'ān being created—this is folly and history has no knowledge of it whatsoever. The intellect cannot believe it under any circumstance.

Or, on the day this folly was said to them, there was no one amongst the Muslim scholars who could answer them by saying, 'Indeed the Word of Allah the Exalted is His statement: "Be!", and indeed the meaning of this "Be!" is pre-eternal and that does not mean that what it is attached to is also pre-eternal.' Intelligent people and the scholars of Arabic in general knew that 'Īsā son of Maryam was not the same as the word "Be!" but what it is attached to. Allah only informed of 'Īsā, peace be upon him, with the "Word" as a means of hyperbole in explaining this attachment and hyperbole in drawing the mind's attention towards the fact that his creation was only the will of Allah the Exalted which was expressed in His statement: "Be!"

If what the will was attached to were pre-eternal like the will itself, then the entire universe would also be eternal, as it is nothing but the result of His will, Glorified and Exalted is He, and Him saying to it, "Be!" Have you not seen the Exalted's statement: **"His command when He wills a thing is just to say to it, 'Be!' and it is"** [Yā Sīn 36:82] So, just as Allah the Exalted says to everything He wants to create, "Be!" and it is, Allah the Exalted said the same about 'Īsā son of Maryam, "Be!", and he was created. Furthermore, just as all things are temporal in their creation even though the pre-eternal speech of

those who would not be able to answer their argument without claiming that the Qur'ān is created and negating the attribute of speech from His essence, Exalted is He. The Mu'tazilah went with that position because they thought it was the truth, regardless of everything else. If they knew that the truth was the position of the majority of Muslims, they would not have clung to this position of theirs, even if all the men of the Church had conspired against them.

Allah is attached to them, likewise 'Īsā son of Maryam, peace be upon him, is temporal in his creation even though the eternal speech of Allah is attached to him.

Amongst the ignorant, is there any ignorant person who does not know that the Word of Allah with which He brought the entire universe into existence, with which the skies and the earth will be folded up and which has been repeated in His book on more than one occasion, is nothing other than His pre-eternal and final decree and judgment, such that it would be absent from the minds of those great scholars and thus they were not aware of it?

What is the connection between the dispute that took part between the Mu'tazilah and others and this issue, when you know that all of them agreed that the words of the Qur'ān are temporal and its meanings are pre-eternal and that the dispute is confined only to what the pre-eternal meaning should be called: is it called the attribute of speech or is it called the attribute of knowledge and will?

Furthermore, it is not surprising at all to see amongst the orientalist and evangelicals those who speak about this folly despite having intellects in their heads that they think with, because it is their well-known fabrication.

However, what is truly amazing and laughable is to look around you and see people from amongst the Muslim Arabs being proud of the same folly and buzzing with the same prattle in excessive joy and ecstasy without you seeing any trace of contemplation or thought in any of their statements or researches.

In order for there not to be any doubt attached to you coming from the statements of many of those who have delved into talking about the history of the Mu'tazilah and the issue of the Qur'ān being created or not, from either the orientalist or the Muslims who imitate them—necessity required that we go into detail when mentioning the reality of this dispute and its essence, as well as its causes.

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7. Life: This is a pre-eternal attribute that is established for His essence, Exalted is He, with which the previous attributes are established, and its transmitted evidence is the Exalted's statement: **"Allah, there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining"** [al-Baqarah 2:255], and Him being alive is a consequence of the attribute of life being affirmed for him. Its rational evidence is what has been established by describing Him, may His majesty be manifest, with the attributes of knowledge, power, will and so forth, as it is not imagined that they are affirmed for someone unless the attribute of life is also affirmed for him.

This is the totality of the attributes of affirmation that have been conveyed to us by transmitted proof and supported by rational proof, and what we have mentioned in explaining each one of these attributes is sufficient. Likewise, it is obligatory to have firm conviction that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, possesses these attributes, for it is obligatory to be firmly convinced that their opposites do not apply to Him, Mighty and Majestic, which necessitates that these attributes be affirmed.

2. The Attributes of Affirmed Meaning:

As for the attributes of affirmed meaning, they are nothing more than the outcomes of the attributes of affirmation. In other words, they are the rulings that result from establishing the attributes of affirmation. Thus, they are that He, may His majesty be manifest, is powerful, willing, knowing, hearing, seeing, speaking and living, and the Mu'tazilah do not disagree about attributing these attributes in this way to Allah, may His majesty be manifest. However, they judged them to be separate and initial, without seeing them as the outcome of the essential attributes that are established for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, as has been explained, and at this point we have no interest in explaining more than what we have already clarified for you in this regard.

* * *

3. Explaining what each of these attributes is attached to:

By looking at what these attributes are attached to, we can divide them into four categories:

The first category is those that are attached to all necessities, possibilities and impossibilities, and it is the two attributes of knowledge and speech. As for the attribute of knowledge, it is because, as we have said, it unveils the realities of things as they are without influencing them at all. It would be impossible, with regards to Allah, Glorified and Exalted, for it not to apply to all necessities, possibilities and impossibilities. As for the attribute of speech, it is because it is attached to things as an indication and clarification or a command and prohibition. His explanation, Glorified and Exalted is He, His command and His prohibition apply to what is necessary, what is impossible and what is possible, as several verses in His Book testify to.

As for the second category, it is only attached to possibilities, and it is the two attributes of will and power. As for the necessary and the impossible, they have nothing to do with these attributes.

The explanation of this is that both attributes of will and power are only attached to things in terms of specifying and influencing, such as bringing into existence, taking out of existence, and so forth. The necessary cannot be taken out of existence and the impossible cannot be brought into existence. Otherwise, the necessary would not be necessary and the impossible would not be impossible. If it were possible to take the necessary out of existence with it remaining necessary, or to bring the impossible into existence with it remaining impossible, it would be possible to gather two opposites in one time and in one place, which all sane people know to be impossible.

Will and power only being attached to possibilities does not mean incapacity

If you study this statement carefully, you will know that will and power only being attached to possibilities does not mean incapacity or imperfection of will. Rather, it means that perfect, complete will has no affair being directed at the necessary as long as it is necessary or at the impossible as long as it is impossible, and the same goes for power. Rather, it is not possible for the intellect to understand how will and power can be attached to the necessary and the impossible. If, for example, it were said to you, that Allah's will is attached to bringing the impossible into existence (and it is a partner in divinity) and then it brought it into existence—your intellect would not be able to believe this statement at all, because it is self-evidently impossible.

This is because the meaning of this statement is that He brought a god into existence that, like Him, exists by necessity, and it is impossible for that which exists by necessity to be preceded by non-existence, as we explained before, and therefore he would not actually exist by necessity. If you said, 'No, that is how he is despite being created and preceded by non-existence', that would mean that you are saying that he exists by necessity despite his existence only being possible, which is a clear contradiction that the intellect articulates.

This is what we mean when we say that will and power not being attached to other than the possible is not called incapacity or an imperfection. Rather, it is because their meaning is based on not being attached to other than the possible, such as taking out of existence, for example. It is not possible for its effect to be manifest unless it is attached to that which exists. As for that which does not exist, by its very nature the meaning of taking out of existence cannot be attached to it, and that is not, in any way, evidence of the imperfection of this meaning or its weakness. If you went and forced it to be attached to it, by virtue of a verbal formulation, for example, such as you saying, 'I

took the non-existent out of existence', you would be doing nothing more than composing empty speech that has no meaning.

Amongst people you will see examples of those who are beguiled, thinking that they can shake the faith in Allah that resides in the hearts of a certain number of believers whenever they confront them with the question: can Allah create a god just like Him?, imagining that if those asked answer that it is possible, by doing so they will admit that they cannot declare those who associate partners with Allah to be disbelievers, and if they answer that it is not possible then they will be attributing incapacity to Allah, which would be evidence that He is not a god!

In actual fact, this imagining goes back to a remarkable form of stupidity.

It is known that the questioner—in order to actually be considered a questioner—should imagine the meaning of his question, and in order to imagine its meaning it should have a meaning. If the question does not have a meaning then it cannot possibly have any form in the mind of the questioner. If that is the case, then the question, at that point, cannot be called a question other than in terms of its form and style. As for the subject matter and the content, it is drivel, and there is no answer to drivel; not because of an incapacity to answer but because an answer has to be in response to a question, and the question has not yet been produced.

If someone says to you, 'At the same moment, can you be both absent from me and visible in front of me?'—he has not actually presented you with a question or a hope that you will answer him, because he himself does not know exactly what he wants and in his mind there is not any form of whatever it is that he wants, and it is impossible for his mind to have any form for the meaning of this question. Thus, whatever the answer may be—assuming that there is an answer—it will not correspond to any meaning that is imagined in the mind of the questioner.

To put it more clearly, we can say that this question, in essence, is nothing but drivel and there is no difference between it and any clause in which the words are mixed up and there is no meaning. Therefore, it would be natural for you to look with utter compassion and pity at whoever stops and presents this drivel to you in the form of a question and then turn your face away without giving a single word in response. That is because nothing has been said that requires an answer, such that a sane person would expect an answer from you.

Indeed the one who stops you and says to you, 'Can Allah create a god just like Him?' or some other folly⁽¹⁾—it is not less drivel than the sentence we used above as an example. This is because drivel is nothing more than speech that contains no meaning whatsoever that is imagined in the mind, and there is no doubt that no sane person would ever imagine this question about Allah to have any meaning, such that he would strive to ascertain the veracity of whatever he had imagined it to be.

Indeed, questions like this could have an imagined or hypothetical meaning, and that would be when the question comes from a small child who is going through the phase of enquiring about everything while his intellect still is not developed enough to keep pace with his endeavours and fantasies, and thus you find him wearying his father with many questions that have no meaning and some of them could be like this question.

At that point there must be wisdom...you must present to him some form of an answer, even though it is not actually an answer, just as he posed the form of a question to you, even though it was not actually a question. You could say to him, 'My dear son, Allah has the power to create anything, but a partner for Allah the Exalted

(1) Another example of this folly is the drivel that some people put forward by saying, 'Can Allah create a rock that He cannot lift?' The meaning of the question is: 'Can Allah be incapable?!'

is not a thing, because it is impossible, and the impossible is not called a thing'.

Perhaps you will say, 'Why is this statement not considered an actual answer?'

I will respond by saying that this is not an answer to a question. It is educating an ignoramus, because if he knew the meaning of his speech, and knew the meaning of impossible, necessary and possible, he would realise the inability to conceive its content and he would realise that it is not a question that can be put forward and answered, and thus he would refrain from presenting it and demanding an answer to it. As for someone who actually presents this in the form of a question, this means that he is an ignoramus, he needs education. He is not a questioner demanding an answer.

As for the third category, it is attached to everything in existence, and it is the two attributes of hearing and sight. They are not attached to things that do not exist. Rather, they are attached to the various things in existence beyond that, whether they are of the possible type or the necessary.

This is if we say that both attributes of hearing and seeing are attached to everything in existence in a way that is encompassing and in addition to knowledge. If we go with what the likes of al-Sa'd in *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id* have gone with, which is that hearing is only attached to that which is heard and sight is only attached to that which is seen, then they are not attached to everything in existence.

We have already mentioned consigning the reality of this matter to Allah, Mighty and Majestic, as many imams and researchers have inclined to do, and it suffices us to affirm what Allah the Exalted has affirmed for Himself. As for what is beyond that, that for which no report or elucidation has come to us, we entrust knowledge of it to Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

However, what is important here is that you know that these two attributes are not attached to non-existent matters by consensus, as being attached to them is inconceivable. If not, they would fall under the category of existent matters, and it is not possible to gather existence and non-existence together because they are mutually exclusive, and it is impossible. An example of this would be touching, tasting and smelling. Do we say, 'I touch something non-existent' or 'I tasted it' or 'I smelled it'? If someone claimed this, would it be possible to believe that they are sane?

Know that this discussion reflects more light on the discussion regarding power and will and neither of them being attached to other than that which is possible, as the basis for both of them is the same.

As for the fourth category, it is not attached to anything, and it is the attribute of life. With regards to Allah the Exalted, it is established for His essence and it is not attached to anything besides Him. This is because it has no attachment to things in terms of unveiling, such as knowledge, hearing and sight, or in terms of influencing and specifying, such as will and power. It is only a meaning that is established for the essence of Allah. Its affair is that it confirms that the aforementioned attributes are indeed established for Him.

* * *

3. The Consequences of These Attributes In terms of Theological Facts

You can summarise these facts in the following way:

Firstly, Allah the Exalted is transcendent above the opposites of these attributes and all other imperfections.

Secondly, His actions, may His majesty be manifest, have no final reason (*'illah*).

Thirdly, Allah is not obligated to do anything for His slaves or anyone in His creation, and good and evil are relative matters.

Fourthly, the outcome of man's will in the face of Allah's will, may His majesty be manifest

Fifthly, decree (*qaḍā'*) and predestination (*qadar*); what they both mean and the obligation to believe in them

Let us start with the first of them:

1. Allah the Exalted is transcendent above the opposites of these attributes and all other imperfections

The elucidation of this is that the attributes we have finished explaining and clarifying what they are attached to are affirmed for Allah the Exalted based on decisive transmitted and rational evidence, as you have seen, and thus we must have faith in them, which is by being certain that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is described with every one of them.

Faith in them requires that the opposites of each one of them not be applied to Him, may His majesty be manifest, for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, by virtue of these attributes being affirmed for Him, does not have a partner or a peer, He is not confined in a place and

He is not restricted within a time, He is not a substance, a contingent or a mass and none of their exigencies are valid for Him, such as being indicated to as being over here or over there, having movement attributed to Him and relocating from one place to another. The same goes for ignorance, lying, sleep, forgetfulness, force and compulsion⁽¹⁾, and other opposites of the attributes that we have mentioned.

The ambiguous verses regarding attributes and the position of the First Three Generations (*al-Salaf*) and those who came after (*al-Khalaf*) concerning them:

However, there are verses in Allah's Book that are formed in this way—in terms of the outward purport—and affirmed ḥadīths from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whose outward words and expressions indicate the affirmation of some of these imperfections and opposites that we have negated for His essence, may His majesty be manifest, such as direction, corporality, limbs, body parts and being confined within space. For example, He, Glorified and Exalted, has said, **“and your Lord arrives with the angels rank upon rank”** [al-Fajr 89:22], and there is His statement: **“Allah's hand is over their hands”** [al-Fath 48:10], and His statement: **“No! Both His hands are open wide and He gives however He wills”** [al-Mā'idah 5:64]. and His statement: **“the All-Merciful, established firmly upon the Throne”** [Ṭaha 20:5]. and there is his statement, blessings and peace be upon him: {Indeed the hearts of the Children of Adam are between two fingers from the fingers of the All-Merciful.} and his statement: {Indeed Allah created Adam in his image}.

Thus, how can we reconcile between the indisputable, decisive evidence that we have mentioned and clarified and the outward purport of these verses and texts?

(1) (tn): i.e. He is not forced or compelled to do anything against His will.

The answer is that these Qur'ānic texts are of the ambiguous type of which Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has mentioned verses in His Noble Book. What is meant by ambiguous (*mutashābih*) is every text that draws possibilities around the meaning that is intended by it and whose outward purport makes one imagine them to mean what the evidences have decisively negated. However, there are other verses that also discuss the attributes of Allah the Exalted, but they contain clear judgments, i.e. they are decisive in demonstrating that nothing is possible apart from the clear, obvious meaning, such as His statement: **“Nothing is like Him”**⁽¹⁾ and His statement: **“Say: ‘He is Allah, Absolute Oneness, Allah, the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born. And no one is comparable to Him’”**⁽²⁾.

Allah has made clear in His Book, in plain terms, the believer's need to follow the texts that contain clear judgments in His Book and to build his creed in Allah according to them, and He has placed the ambiguous texts beyond them such that they can be understood and known according to the meaning that is intended by them. He has severely reproached those who ignore the decisive, luminous texts that contain clear judgment in order to adhere to abstruse, ambiguous expressions and interpret them however one wants, and this is in His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **“It is He who sent down the Book to you from Him: verses containing clear judgments—they are the core of the Book—and others which are ambiguous. Those with deviation in their hearts follow that which is ambiguous, desiring conflict, seeking its inner meaning. No one knows its inner meaning but Allah. Those firmly rooted in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it. All of it is from our Lord.’ But only people of intelligence pay heed”** [Āl 'Imrān 3:7].

(1) (tn): Sūrat al-Shūrā 42:11.

(2) (tn): Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ.

The common denominator between the two groups:

Based on this, all Muslims agree that Allah the Exalted is transcendent above what the outward purport of these Qur'ānic texts necessitates, as well as the Prophetic ḥadīths, by way of attributes that contradict Allah's perfection and His divinity, implementing the command of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and in harmony with His warning against following what is ambiguous and delving into interpreting it while abandoning that which carries clear judgment.

After agreeing on this—and it is the scope that the Muslim must have firm conviction in—they differed in their positions regarding the ambiguous texts into two schools of thought. The first is the way of the predecessors of the First Three Generations and the second is what the latter-day scholars after them have inclined towards.

What is unique about the First Three Generations:

The school of the First Three Generations is not to delve into any interpretation or detailed explanation of these texts and to suffice what affirming what Allah the Exalted has affirmed for Himself along with His transcendence, Mighty and Majestic is He, above every imperfection resemblance to temporal beings, and the means of doing so is general interpretation of these texts and to transfer the detailed knowledge of what is intended by them to Allah's knowledge, Mighty and Majestic is He.

As for leaving these texts upon their outward meaning without any interpretation, whether general or detailed, this is not permissible, and it is something that neither the *Salaf* nor the *Khalaf* inclined towards. How could they, for if they had, your intellect would have been charged with bearing contradictory meanings regarding many of these attributes. Allah has attributed a single eye to Himself in His statement, Exalted is He: **“So that you would be brought up under My eye”** [Taha 20:39] and another time He attributed eyes to Himself,

in the plural. He said, **“So wait steadfastly for the judgment of your Lord – you are certainly before Our eyes”** [al-Ṭūr 52:48]. If you were to explain both verses according to their outward purport without any interpretation, you would impose a contradiction upon the Qur'ān, which it is innocent of. You can read Allah's statement: **“the All-Merciful, established firmly upon the Throne”** [Taha 20:5] and His statement: **“We are nearer to Him than His jugular vein”** [Qāf 50:16] and if you explain them according to their outward meaning without any general interpretation, you would impose clear contradiction upon Allah the Exalted's Book, for how can He be firmly established upon His throne without any interpretation and at the same time be closer to me than my jugular vein without any interpretation?

You can read the Exalted's statement: **“Do you feel secure against Him Who is in heaven causing the earth to swallow you up when suddenly it rocks from side to side?”** [al-Mulk 67:16] and His statement: **“It is He who is God in heaven and God in earth”** [al-Zukhruf 43:84] and if you were to explain them according to their outward purport you would be inserting contradiction into the Book of Allah, may His majesty be manifest, as is clear.

However, when you declare that Allah, with regards to all these verses, is transcendent above resembling His creation in terms of being confined in a place and having dimensions, body parts, a form and a shape and then you affirm for Allah what He has affirmed for His essence, in a way that befits His perfection, and that is by entrusting the details of what is meant by each of those texts to Allah, may His majesty be manifest, by doing so you make yourself safe from any contradiction in your understanding and you make the Qur'ān safe from being imagined that it contains any contradiction. This is the way of the First Three Generations, may Allah have mercy on them. Do you not see them saying about them, ‘Pass over them

without going into how'?⁽¹⁾ In other words, if they had not interpreted them in a general way with the meaning that we have clarified, it would not be correct for them to say such a thing, for why would they pass over them without going into how when the indication of the language and the Arabic formulation are clear and prevent any obscurity or ignorance, whether it is the foundation of the meaning or its manner? However, they were absolutely certain that the matter is not according to the outward of what the formulation and language indicate, and this is because of what the other verses that contain clear judgment indicate, and this is a clear, general interpretation. However, they did not get involved in explaining these texts by using other particulars that they would obligate, and this is refraining from detailed interpretation. Reflect on this for it is precise and it is the truth that you should not confuse with anything else.

What is unique about the *Khalaf*:

The school of the *Khalaf*, who came after them, is to interpret these texts in a way that places them on one path in agreement with the other texts that are clear in judgment and which decisively affirm Allah's transcendence above direction, place and limb. Thus, they explained 'firm establishment' in "**the All-Merciful, established firmly upon the Throne**" [Taha 20:5] to mean absolute mastery of power and might, and it is a meaning that is affirmed in the language and well-known. They explained hand in the other verse to mean power or generosity, eye to mean care and supervision. They explained the fingers in the ḥadīth to mean will and power. Regarding the ḥadīth: {Indeed Allah created Adam in his image}, they said that the possessive pronoun goes back to Adam and not to Allah's essence. In other words, Allah created Adam, from the

(1) This was said by Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah and 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubārak. See *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (3/24) in the chapter on the virtue of charity and also see the book *al-'Itiqād* by al-Bayhaqī: 43.

moment in which he brought him into existence, in his image and his form, which is the same image and form that humanity enjoys now. Thus, he did not evolve from one shape into another. They also said that the possessive pronoun could go back to the brother that is mentioned at the beginning of the ḥadīth, according to the narration that Muslim has conveyed in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, which is: {If one of you fights his brother, let him avoid his face, for Allah created Adam in his image.} In other words, let him honour the face, which is the external appearance of Adam, blessings and peace be upon him. Or, the possessive pronoun goes back to the essence of Allah the Exalted, as that is indicated by the other affirmed narration: {Indeed Allah created Adam in the image of the All-Merciful}. However, the meaning of 'in the image' is 'with the attributes', i.e. He equipped him with the attributes of knowledge and comprehension, which are from the attributes of Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

Know that the school of the *Salaf* in their time was the best and the safest, and it was more suited to the inborn faith that is settled permanently in both the intellect and the heart. The school of the *Khalaf* in their time was the outcome that could not have been avoided, because of the intellectual schools and scientific discussions that existed at that time and because of the emergence of Arabic rhetoric, rooted in the rules of figurative expression, simile and metaphor.

And thus, Imam Mālik, may Allah have mercy on him, was able in his time to say to the person who asked him about 'firm establishment' in the verse, 'The how is not known, the 'firm establishment' is not unknown, believing in it is obligatory and asking about it is innovation.' This was the age in which faith and certainty were firmly rooted, because it was in near proximity to the age of Prophecy and because of the illumination that reached it. However, the imams who came in the age of writing and compiling, the blossoming of the sciences and the expansion of circles of discussion and the rhetorical

arts were not able to treat these texts safely without analysing them in light of what the rhetorical arts and metaphor had arrived at, especially when there were freethinkers (*zanādiqah*) amongst who were not content with the method of submission⁽¹⁾, outwardly displaying a need for detailed understanding even though in reality they are stubborn resisters.

What is important is that you know that both schools are ways that lead to the same end, because the outcome of both of them is that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, does not resemble any of His creations and that He is transcendent above all attributes of imperfection. Thus, the difference of opinion that you see between them is only in terms of wording and form.

Furthermore, in this matter we have nothing to do with those factions who have deviated, such as those who called *mu'aṭṭilah*⁽²⁾ or *mujassimah*⁽³⁾, and they are those who imagined Allah, Mighty and Majestic, in the form of a body. Then they went and imagined Him to have the shape and manner that they want, clinging to the outward purports of these texts, turning away from the other, decisive texts and ignoring the nature of this language and the figurative expression, metaphor and various styles of expression that it contains.

These people have no weighing in that which is connected to the Book of Allah the Exalted and its explanation, and they have nothing to do with its verses, whether they carry clear judgment or are ambiguous. They are just a people who have imagined the divine essence as their naked imaginations have formed it. Then they used certain verses from Allah the Exalted's Book in order to affirm these imaginations and corroborate them for them, and what do Allah's brilliant verses indicate other than the radiant truth, and thus they went back to being

(1) (tn): i.e. consigning the meaning to Allah.

(2) (tn): i.e. those who deny that Allah has attributes.

(3) (tn): i.e. anthropomorphists.

devoted to idols they had set up in their heads as opposed to erecting them in front of their eyes. There is no truer description of them than what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has said about them: **"Those with deviation in their hearts follow that which is ambiguous, desiring conflict, seeking its inner meaning"** [Āl 'Imrān 3:7].

2. His actions, may His majesty be manifest, have no final reason.

The definition of final reason:

What is meant by final reason is the objective that is established in a person's mind and which he aims to realise, and thus that pushes him to implement the ways and means that will lead him to that objective. The objective that is established in his mind is the reason for realising those ways and means, and because this objective is in reality an end that the person is aiming for when he applies himself to the means, scholars have called it the 'final reason'. It is from the nature of this reason that its existence in the mind precede the establishment of the ways and means. As for its external and actual existence, that comes after them.

An example of this would be you feeling the need to get warm. Thus, that is the objective that makes you put on your heavy coat. Once you have done that, you have realised the sought objective and you have started to feel warm. Realising warmth is a final reason because it is what made you act. It was represented in the mind beforehand but it was realised externally afterwards.

Explaining how final reason is negated for Allah the Exalted's action:

If you know this, we say:

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Explaining how final reason is negated for Allah the Exalted's action:

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what it means and that it contradicts being forced and compelled to do something one does not want. Likewise, you know that Allah the Exalted's will is perfect and is not tarnished by any sense of being compelled or induced to do what He does not want. This is how Allah's will is different from man's will, for in man it is deficient and tarnished by coercion and compulsion, while for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, it is perfect and complete.

This is a clear fact that a researcher can understand with minimal contemplation.

However, if this is the case, is it possible for us to say that Allah's actions are based on final reasons just like our actions?

The answer is that it is not permissible for us to say this because it contradicts what has been affirmed for Allah's essence, Glorious and Exalted is He, regarding the attribute of will, in that it is a complete and perfect attribute and that it is not tarnished by any coercion or compulsion. If you were to say that Allah sent down rain for a reason that He sought, which is the emergence of plants on the face of the earth, and that is what induces Him to send down rain (as is the case with final reason), then what that means is that you are saying, 'Indeed it is necessity that induced Him to send down rain', as it is the inescapable means for vegetation. Thus, the perfect will is therefore directed towards growing plants. As for being directed towards sending down rain, then it is tarnished by a great deal of necessity, which contradicts will. The same goes for what is said regarding all created beings that are the causes of other things, and it is known that the like of this creed or statement regarding the Producer, may His majesty be manifest, is pure disbelief and it clearly contradicts the requirements of divinity.

2) We have also mentioned that one of His attributes is complete, absolute power and it necessitates that everything in existence be of His creation and origination, and if not then the attribute of complete,

absolute power would not be valid for Him, may His majesty be manifest. Nevertheless, the Qur'ān has stated clearly in more than one place that all things in existence are of His creation, such as His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"He created everything and determined it most exactly"** [al-Furqān 25:2] and His statement: "It is He who created everything on earth for you" and His statement: **"Do they not see that Allah, Who created the heavens and earth, has the power to create the like of them?"** [al-Isrā' 17:99].

It is only confirmed that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, created everything if His power was directed towards it from the very beginning, without using any ways or means, and its existence was because of one direct cause, which is Allah's power and His creating. If we presume final reason in His actions and His creation, then that means that between Allah's power, Mighty and Majestic is He, and that reason there are ways and means and they are the direct influencer in producing the end. Thus, Allah's creating is not attached to them except by way of an intermediary and a means to them, and this negates those Qur'ānic texts that decisively state that Allah is the direct creator of everything; just as it negates Allah the Exalted being attributed absolute power.

3) You have learned from everything we have mentioned; the attributes of negation, the attributes of affirmation and the attributes of affirmed meaning, that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is described with all attributes of perfection and He is transcendent above all attributes of imperfection. If we said, in spite of that, that Allah's actions, Mighty and Majestic is He, involved final reason, as is the case for us, that would necessitate saying that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is described with some imperfections and that He seeks to perfect these imperfections from other than Him, and Allah is greatly exalted above such matters. This is because whoever needs something and then cannot obtain it employing specific means is

deficient from two angles. The first is that he needs that thing, and need is a branch of imperfection. The second is that he is not able to obtain that thing except by seeking help from something else. This is the case for everyone whose deeds are based on a final reason, so how can it be valid to attribute any of this reason to any of the Creator's actions, may His majesty be manifest?⁽¹⁾

4) Allah has mentioned in His sublime Book, with inimitable, illuminating clarity, that He the Glorified has created everything that you see in existence, and He put his work into it that He wanted for it. In other words, He created the essence and also gave it the causality for whatever He wanted from caused things. He has said, **"He said, 'Our Lord is He who gives each thing its created form and then guides it'"** [Taha 20:50] and He has said, **"Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High: He who created and moulded; He who determined and guided"** [al-'A'la 97:1-3]. This text decisively and clearly states that there is no cause in the universe except by His creation and His making, so how can it be conceived that this sublime Creator uses some of His creations as means towards realising specific ends?

The texts that seem to affirm reasons and objectives:

If you contemplate what we have mentioned you will understand the meaning of final reason very well and what it means that none of Allah the Exalted's actions can possibly be described with it, and you will be certain of it based on both the rational and the transmitted proofs that we have clarified.

As for the verses and ḥadīths that seem to affirm reasons and objectives for Allah the Exalted, because the letter *lām*⁽²⁾ of justification

(1) See *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* by al-'Aḍad with the supercommentary of 'Abdul Ḥakīm (2/331) and the commentary of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Duwānī (2/206).

(2) (tn): i.e. the letter in the Arabic alphabet that is used to indicate a reason or cause, usually translated as 'in order to' or 'so that' and the like.

is used, such as the Exalted statement: **"I only created jinn and man to worship Me"** [al-Dhāriyāt 51:56] and His statement: **"And we send down from heaven pure water so that by it we may bring a dead land to life and give drink to many of the animals and people we created"** [al-Furqān 25:48-49]. What we imagine from their outward purport is not actually justification, for if that were the case, the matter would necessitate that Allah, may His majesty be manifest, be seeking to complete His divinity by people's worship of Him, and thus He needed it and therefore He created people for its sake. The matter would also necessitate that He have the need to bring land back to life through vegetation and giving drink to people, and thus He has to send down rain in order to realise that. You know self-evidently that this fantasy is impossible for Allah, for Allah does not need anything. Furthermore, He is the Creator of the cause and the thing caused as well as the causality between the two.

The *lām* in verses like this is only an expression of the apparent reason and not the actual reason. In other words, Allah's will is attached to the bringing of man into existence and to making him legally responsible for the requirements of being His slave just as His will is attached to sending down rain and bringing vegetation forth from the earth, and the first being a cause for the second is by a link that is purely from His will and His power.

This meaning is only expressed by us human beings, who are accustomed to imagining a causal and justificatory link between things, using the *lām* of justification and other expressions. There is no harm in doing so, nor is there any harm in you using the *lām* of justification when talking about Allah's creation and how things are in harmony with one another. However, what is forbidden is for you to understand that the *lām* of justification affirms a motive or final reason for Him, Mighty and Majestic.

The difference between affirming a system of causality in created things and negating it for Allah's actions:

Know that this meaning that we have clarified cannot be disputed or contested. All Muslims agree on the contents of what is being said. However, some researchers have deemed it serious to negate final reason with regards to His actions, may His majesty be manifest, in that it gives the impression that there is frivolity in His creation and His actions, and frivolity is impossible for Allah by the clear speech of the Book. Frivolity can only be negated by justifying His creating and His action in accordance with interest and benefit. They have said, 'How can we negate this reason from these created things that are unique in their systematic arrangement and their organisation?

The answer is that negating frivolity for Allah does not impose final reason on His actions. If not, then one would be fleeing from something bad to something worse. That can only be by knowing that there are wisdoms behind His actions and interests that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, knows that come about as a consequence of them, without these wisdoms and interests being final reasons that prompt Him towards these actions. This is the reality. Allah, Might and Majestic, willed that there be sublime wisdoms and interests for His various creations. He was able to bring these interests into existence without them, but He wanted to inform the intellects of His slaves by way of this given arrangement and organisation that the universe has a Creator and Planner, and thus they believe in Him and their hearts submit to Him. He was able to place this faith inside them without them reflecting on the phenomena of the universe and without any of this arrangement and organisation being established, but He willed that their faith be through their intellects expending effort so that they deserve the reward or the burden of sin according to what they have earned and their own efforts. He was able not to make them legally responsible and not create them at all, and it

would not have diminished Him in the slightest if He had not created them and not created a single thing in this entire universe. However, this is what He wanted and nothing resists His decree and He is not asked about what He does. If you were to go and ask about the secret behind every creation and will that would mean that you are presuming a final reason that prompts Him, and you are looking for it in the roots of creation, and this is what we have affirmed the opposite of.

Therefore, the universe is established upon its course and its outward bearing in accordance with a system of causality, no doubt, and by being that way its purpose is to draw the minds' attention towards the existence of its Creator and Planner. This, as you can see, negates frivolity for His actions, Glorified and Exalted is He.

However, this does not mean and does not necessitate that Allah has used some of his other creations as means towards what He wants. Rather, He is the first means and the last. He is the Creator of causes and what is caused, of consequences and preliminaries and of wisdoms and interests. If he has arranged some of them together in creation, then that is only an apparent arrangement.

Let me conclude this discussion for you with the most accurate speech that has been agreed upon in this regard. Contemplate it well so that you know the core of what we have said. The great scholar Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī says in his book *Mawqif al-'Aql*,

'As for the position that Allah's attributes are necessarily frivolous or coincidental if they are not justified by objectives and a final reason, it is pure fantasy that originates from the fact that those who state it are comparing Allah the Exalted to themselves, i.e. to man, who does not do anything unless there is a preference and a final reason. If he does not do so then his actions are frivolous and coincidental. And it would suffice in notifying them of their mistake in this comparison that they know that Allah the Exalted does not need to contemplate

or reflect, while the people of deliberation amongst humanity act in accordance with a preference and a final reason that they work towards, such that they need to think about the consequences of their actions.

‘Justification being negated with regards to the Exalted’s actions means that He does not base His actions on a preference and final reason, because that is the way things are for those who think about the consequences of matters, and Allah the Exalted is transcendent above that by necessity. This, in turn, does not negate that the Exalted’s actions are not free of wisdoms and interests while not being based on them. However, they are not expressed in terms of final causes, because a final cause is what an actor bases his action upon in his mind and thinks about before embarking upon the action, and from here we say that wisdom follows His actions and we do not say that His actions follow wisdom’.

He also says, ‘The summary of this is that the Exalted’s actions emanate from Him without thinking about the consequences as we human beings think about them. This absence of thinking is a requirement of the Exalted’s perfection while our perfection lies in thinking. There is nothing like Him. If someone objects to Allah the Exalted knowing the consequences of His actions without thinking by saying that this knowledge justifies His actions, we say that knowledge of the consequences and the ends is not a justification from the Exalted for His actions that lead to them. Rather, justification means to base one’s actions on a preference and final reason in one’s knowledge before one does it, and this is the same as thinking about the consequences. This is something that those who advocate justification cannot deny, and Allah is exalted above it. We negate justification based on ends, not that there are no ends or that there is no knowledge of them. Understand this subtle difference from us just as we have understood it by Allah’s enabling success. Yes,

if the matter is looked at through our human eyes, it is as if Allah the Exalted does these actions for those ends, meaning that if we were to do those actions, those consequences that follow them would be final reasons for them. From here it is valid to use final reason as evidence of Allah’s existence, even though there is no causality with regards to Allah’s actions but only ends that follow His actions, and the knowledge of the one who does them is indicated by the correlation between those actions and those ends’⁽¹⁾.

* * *

3. Allah is not obligated to do anything and good and evil are relative matters

Perhaps you will realise, if you reflect on this title, that it is the necessary outcome of the previous reality that we have clarified.

If it is established that there is no intermediary between Allah and anything whose creation His will was attached to, and that all things in existence, including adaptation and contingents, is by direct creation from Allah – therefore it is established that things do not comprise (intrinsically) anything good or evil, i.e. they cannot be characterised as good or evil in the sense of being firmly established in them by nature nor by creation.

Thus, Allah being the Creator of all things with their attributes necessitates that He be the Creator of the thing, and He is the creator of the meaning of good and the meaning of evil and He is the One who links and joins between that thing and this meaning.

Good and evil are relative states, not intrinsic realities:

Once you have grasped this fact, you will also grasp that good and evil do not have intrinsic roots that are connected to the essence of something such that they cannot be detached from it. Rather, they

(1) *Mawqif al-‘Aql wa al-‘Ilm min Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*: (3/17).

are meanings that are made to follow whatever ruling Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has given. Thus, what we ourselves call good or evil, if Allah wanted to, He could invert the matter and make the good evil and the evil good, and this is as long as everything is by Allah's creation and ruling. This is what we mean when we say that good and evil are relative matters.

Perhaps you will be surprised and say, 'How can I understand that the good of honesty and justice is relative and not intrinsic, and that the evil of lying and oppression is relative and not intrinsic?'

The answer is that good or evil in matters like this originate from a number of directions all of which are relative and external to the essence and essential nature of these matters. The good of honesty either originates from it bringing about various benefits for the one who is honest, or from the fact that the honest person is rewarded for it on the Day of Standing, or that souls have a propensity to respect those who are honest and to be repelled by those who are dishonest. All of these—as you can see—are motives that are external to the essence of honesty itself. This means that Allah was and still is able to change souls and their natures and thus have them not be attached to loving honesty and being repelled by dishonesty. The same goes for the principles of justice, for example, for we only consider a matter to be good on account of it guaranteeing everyone their rights, and that is a reason that is external to the essence and essential nature of that principle. Likewise, making sure that someone gets their right is only a good thing because Allah has endowed man with an attachment to needs and thus he cannot be detached from them, and thus they are a right of his. If He had endowed with some other form and had not made him needy, he would have nothing to do with these needs. He would not seek them out and they would not be a right of his and therefore it would not be an injustice if he did not receive them nor would it be justice if they were maintained for him.

Because we are so firmly accustomed to the connections that Allah has created between things and their qualities, we think that the meaning of good or evil has become hidden within the essence of each of them and thus they cannot be detached from one another.

Once you have properly grasped this reality, you will know that Allah the Exalted is not compelled, with regards to His creation and His judgment, to do anything, because if He were compelled, the cause of compulsion would be the necessity for Him to follow that which is most proper and best and avoid that which is evil and corrupt. You know that what makes the proper proper, the corrupt corrupt and the evil evil is Allah, Mighty and Majestic, that there is nothing that can be called intrinsically good or evil and that for Allah, at the beginning of creation, all matters are equal. Thus, it is possible for Allah the Exalted not to reward an obedient person and to punish, and not to punish a disbeliever and to reward him. It is not said that that negates wisdom and interest, because the One who makes something a wisdom or an interest is Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and it is not reasonable to describe any of His actions as negating interest.

However, we say that Allah prescribed for Himself, in the clear speech of His Book, that He would reward the obedient, as kindness and mercy from Him. Thus, He must carry out His promise because He has informed us of it and because He is the most truthful of those who tell the truth, and because through His legislation He has made truthfulness good and lying evil.

The quintessence is that Allah has created what He wants in this universe and He arranged its particulars in such a way so that some of them become good and beneficial and some of them become evil and harmful. We would not know or be aware of the attributes of good or evil in this or that if it were not for His creation, His arrangement and His combining between essences and their properties.

The important conclusions that emanate from this reality:

This reality discloses to you, with the utmost ease, three conclusions that branch out from it:

The first is that things are fundamentally free of being dyed with good or evil, benefit or harm. Then Allah, Mighty and Majestic, dyed some things with dye and other things with the other one. This means that when we say that something is good or evil this description is relative and not inherent.

The second is that our statement that Allah created that which is evil or harmful is affirmed, because when He inserts specific qualities in things or drives them towards consequences that have a certain effect that contradicts the interests of people, or He creates aversion in people's dispositions towards them, this means that He has created evil along with everything else that He has created.

The third is that it is not from the attributes of imperfection, which we know Allah is transcendent above, that He has created that which is evil and harmful in the universe, because it is from Allah's affirmed attributes of perfection that He creates whatever He wants without anything preventing Him from doing so; no force, no custom and no law. His creation of different categories of existence, good and evil, harmful and beneficial, is nothing other than a manifestation of this perfect description. However, what negates this perfect description and necessitates imperfection is to say that He has taken on the quality of evil or is described with it. There is a huge difference between this and that. It is not imperfection in Allah's essence that He creates incapacity in the universe and it is embodied in manifold phenomena. Rather, the imperfection would be to describe Him with any type of imperfection. It is not evil that Allah creates dishonesty (a phenomenon that some people are described with). Rather, it would be evil for Him to assume any of

this dishonesty that He has created,⁽¹⁾ not because it is evil in itself in the rational sense, for we have established the falsity of that, but because it is wrapped in meanings and necessities that are not consistent with the interests of His slaves and because Allah made it evil through His legislation. Thus, the Producer, may His majesty be manifest, cannot be described with it.

The matter should not be confusing for you and thus you say, 'And Allah has also made injustice evil through His legislation, and He should not be described with injustice, and therefore the obedient person should not be punished, or people should not be tested with afflictions unless there was some crime that they committed' – because injustice is you acting freely something that is specified for someone else without their consent, and this is what the Revealed Law has declared evil.

As for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, acting freely with His creations, this is completely different. This is Him acting freely with His dominion, which He has absolute will over, as is clear to you. The uncertainty that goes around your mind is only because you are comparing Allah the Exalted's essence to yourself and to what people's customs have agreed upon in their societies. Whatever people's customs have agreed upon is nothing but a very small part of Allah's creation and origination. It is not possible, under any circumstances, for anything in creation to pass judgment on Allah's will and what He does.

Nevertheless, the manifestations of suffering, tribulation and afflictions that you see in the universe, which afflict many people and which are called 'injustice' in the terminology that we use when dealing with one another, comprise wisdoms and interests that are hidden from us, and it is not a condition of their validity that we

(1) Note the difference between creating evil and taking on its quality. A detailed discussion of this can be found in Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftanāzānī's commentary on al-'Aqā'id, p.363.

know about them and become acquainted with them, just as it is not a condition of their legitimacy that our intellects sign off on them with agreement and consent.

It suffices you as a manifestation of wisdom that you contemplate the Exalted's statement: **"We test you with both good and evil as a trial. And you will be returned to us"** [al-Anbiyā' 21:35] and His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"But We have made some of you a trial for others. Will you not be steadfast? Your Lord sees everything"** [al-Furqān 25:20].

The consequence of everything we have mentioned is that the intellect alone is not able to unveil Allah's ruling in things based on whatever good or evil is apparent therein. This is because whatever good or evil you see therein is not a rational necessity that is inseparable from the essence, such that Allah's ruling must inevitably follow it. Rather, it is merely an apparent connection or an imaginary concept because of the connection that the aforementioned things have to obvious benefits that are external to them, and Allah's ruling might not be consistent with them. This is why all Muslims have agreed that there is no legislation before Messengers are sent and no legal responsibility, and people who lived in any period of time in which they were cut off from the message of the previous Prophets and the sending of the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, are not taken to task and are not legally responsible. This is evidenced by the Exalted's statement: **"We never punish until We have sent a Messenger"**⁽¹⁾ [al-Isrā' 17:14].

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¹ If you would like further elucidation of the attributes of good and evil being merely relative in all things, you can refer to what Imam al-Ghazālī wrote on the matter in *al-Mustaṣfā*, for he discusses it with the utmost accuracy and splendour, and you will find therein the theory of conditioned response which some scientists boast of as being one of the marvels of the modern age, so refer to *al-Mustaṣfā* (v.1, p.57).

How the Mu'tazilah differ in this matter:

Know that the Mu'tazilah differ with Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah in this matter, for they consider things to be rationally good or evil and this emanates from the essence of the thing. Based on that, they decided that Allah the Exalted's rulings must go in accordance with what is best and most proper, that that is an obligation from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and that the intellect by itself can judge things and know Allah's ruling therein. Therefore, all sane people are legally responsible, regardless of whether or not Messengers have been sent to them, and the Messenger in the verse⁽¹⁾ is the intellect, according to their claim.

The Mu'tazilah have committed many errors in this issue, and the incoherence of their thinking does not manifest itself in any issue as much as it manifests itself in this issue. They knew that with this statement of theirs they were standing on the edge of disbelief, and there was nothing between them and it apart from them saying that the interests of the universe pass judgement on Allah's legislation and His actions, and it is the natural conclusion of their imagination and their judgment that things are intrinsically good or evil. However, they do not say that it is an obligation upon Allah to do what is most proper. Rather, they say that what is most proper is obligatory from Him, for they do not mean an obligation in terms of Him being compelled externally. Instead, they mean that Allah being described as perfect is the source of this obligation. These are nice words, but they do not agree with the original premise that they acknowledged, which is that the attributes of good and evil are established in the essence of things from the beginning.

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(1) (tn): i.e. Sūrat al-Isrā' 17:14.

4. The outcome of man's will in the face of Allah's will, may His majesty be manifest

Now, and we know that Allah the Exalted's will is absolute and perfect, and is suitable to be attached to everything possible, how can we conceive that man also has a will besides it? We also know, based on the proofs of experience and observation, that man wills and chooses in much of his conduct and in many of his ideas, so what kind of will is this and what is its reality? Indeed, what is its outcome next to Allah's will?

The answer is that when Allah, Mighty and Majestic, created man, He established in him two types of motion and behaviour. The first of them is that in which man is equal to all other things in existence, such as animals, inanimate objects, plants and celestial bodies, and these are the inevitable movements and mechanical functions that man has no reward or will regarding, such as the movement of growth and what follows it, such as strength, old age and weakness; birth and death; and the various emotions and reactions, such as love, hate, hunger, thirst, fear and fright.

As for the second type, it is the behaviours and actions that originate from an amazing and special secret that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has placed in man. We call it choice and will. Allah's will, Mighty and Majestic is He, was attached to planting this secret in man's being, this secret that is the axis of legal responsibility in him and allows him to be called in many of the behaviours and actions that emanate from this secret: free and able to choose.

This means that Allah the Exalted's will was attached to you having will, and thus Allah's will, Mighty and Majestic is He, pervades everything that you choose and want to do. Therefore, it is not possible for there to be any contradiction between Allah the Exalted's will and what you choose by way of your own will, for if

we were to presume that Allah does not will some action that you have chosen with your will, it would mean that Allah, Glorious and Exalted, does not will your will, which directed you towards that action. This contradicts what has been established regarding Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wanting you to have a will and wanting to create this secret in you. The falsity of presuming that Allah might not want the action that you have chosen has been established.

Let us provide an example to make this reality easier for you to understand. You have a servant in your house and you want to know the extent of his honesty and trustworthiness in serving and transacting. So, in order to achieve this objective of yours, you give him a certain amount of money and send him to the market to buy some everyday items and you give him the necessary scope to do what he wants without sending anyone to watch over him or check him.

With this arrangement of yours, you wanted him to be free to do and not to do and to respond to nothing but the call of his conscience and his internal thoughts, such that he would enjoy a will that is not tarnished by compulsion, and this is so that you know what he is really like. If he returns and he has betrayed the trust regarding the money you gave him and the goods he has brought back, know that in reality you will this outcome,⁽¹⁾ and if he returns having fulfilled the trust in what he has done, you also willed this outcome, for you did not give him a free hand to do what he wanted except that you wanted the outcome to be manifest, whatever that outcome might be, regardless of whether you liked it and were pleased with it.

If this clear to you, then you know that the outcome of man's will next to Allah's will is nothing but like the will of the servant next to the will of his master, and for Allah is the most exalted designation. Thus, your will is attached to your voluntary behaviours

(1) while noticing the difference, which is that Allah knows what the slave is really like and He knows what he will choose merely by his will.

and actions contained with the will of Allah the Exalted, but not by way of compulsion and force (as is the case for His will being attached to the first type of movements and functions). Rather, it is by way of placing the secret of will and choice in your being, and His wisdom behind that is that by virtue of it you attain whatever you like, without any force or compulsion, so that who you really are can be manifested in your conduct. Then, because of this, you become deserving of Allah's reward or his punishment, and it is clear that this conduct of yours becomes, because of that, from what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wants.

This is how you know that nothing happens in Allah's dominion except what He wants and wills, and that does not contradict Him giving you will and desire as well, just as His knowledge of all things does not contradict Him giving you knowledge of a few things.

The difference between will and pleasure:

Perhaps you want to ask after this: how can Allah punish man for doing things that are from Allah's will, Mighty and Majestic is He? Indeed, how can behaviour that Allah has forbidden man from engaging in be willed by Allah at the same time?

The answer is that this problem is a branch of a delusion that you should be warned against falling into, and it is to imagine that will and command mean the same thing, and that the one necessitates the other.

This is a huge mistake in supposition, for you know from what has been discussed that nothing happens in the universe except by His will. Otherwise, there would be things in existence that are beyond His will and His choice, and this is one of the clearest manifestations of incapacity and weakness, which Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is transcendent above. You also know that Allah says in His Book: **"He is not pleased with disbelief for His slaves, and if you are grateful He is pleased with you for that"** [al-Zumar 39:7] Therefore,

the disbelief of Abū Jahl, for example, is within what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has willed, as we have mentioned, but it is not within that which pleases Allah, Mighty and Majestic, or within what Allah has commanded, as the verse clearly demonstrates.

The example of the servant that we mentioned to you before draws your attention to this fact. We said that you only gave him a free hand to do what he wants with your money because you wanted the outcome to be manifest, whatever that outcome might be, regardless of whether you liked it and were pleased with it. We all notice this reality in our personal experiences and behaviours and our interactions with one another. I saw with absolute emphasis that I do not love for my student to fail in his studies and not succeed, and I do not stop commanding him to study and expend effort. Despite that, when I want to give him an exam at the end of the year, my will pervades, without any doubt, the outcome that will be unveiled through that choice, for by doing so I want that outcome to be manifest, whatever it is, pass or fail, and it is not possible for any sane person to believe that there is a contradiction between the diligence that I was commanding him to and what I want today in terms of the result that will make plain the reality of his affair.

This is how you should know that will does not necessitate the command of or pleasure with the thing that is willed. This is also one of the mistakes that the Mu'tazilah went astray with and their statements regarding it became confused in fits and jerks.

If you look deeply into what we have mentioned, you will understand that man, in all of his voluntary actions and behaviours, is only moving within the sphere of the Divine Will and not overstepping it. You will also understand that there is no contradiction between man having a will and being free to choose in these behaviours and actions of his and him not overstepping the Divine Will. It is not the

case, as some superficial people think, that as long man's actions are fulfilling Allah's will that he has no freedom or reward therein. That is not the case, for if it were then it would be valid for the student who failed in his exam to say to the teacher who examined him, 'I was compelled to fail, because you wanted me to fail when you wanted to examine me'. It will also be valid for the servant to say to his master, 'I was compelled to commit the treachery took place in dealing with you, under the authority of your will, which directed you to test me and give me in free hand in disposing of your money.' It is self-evident that no sane person would ever say such a thing or accept it being said by someone else.

In clarifying this reality, the great scholar Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftanāzānī says in his commentary on *al-'Aqā'id*, 'If it is said, after establishing that Allah the Exalted's will and knowledge are universal, that compulsion is decisively necessary, because the two are either attached to the necessity of an action and thus it is necessary or its non-existence and thus it is prevented, and there is no choice when it comes to necessity and prevention – we say, "He knows and He wills that the slave do or not do something out of his choice, and thus there is no problem"'⁽¹⁾.

If you were say, 'What you are saying would be convincing and understood were it not for a verse in the Qur'ān that nullifies what you are saying, as it indicates that man possesses no will of his own except by the permission and will of Allah, and it is the Exalted's statement: **"But you will not will unless Allah wills. All is All-Knowing, All-Wise"** [al-Insān 76:30], the answer would be that this verse is nothing but a foundation and a constitution for what we have mentioned, for it clearly elucidates that man would not enjoy any will in his being, directing its secret towards choosing whatever he wants by way of behaviours and actions were it not for Allah, Mighty and

(1) *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*, p.354.

Majestic, willing to put this sublime secret in his being. This matter has been clearly established, for right now I am choosing to focus my time on writing this important discussion, but how could I have this choice, based on the most sublime secret in my being, if Allah, Mighty and Majestic, had not willed to put into my being, through merely His grace and generosity, something of this sublime secret? And now Allah has generously favoured me, for He has willed to make me a possessor of will in my voluntary behaviours and actions. Have I not therefore become someone who wills and chooses? Are not the actions that I have earned the fruit of this will of mine, even though it is known and certain that they are within the sphere of that same Divine Will?

By Allah, I never cease to be amazed by those who hold on to this verse and then keep trying to use it to pulverise the most sublime divine gift to man after intellect, which is the gift of will and the power to choose.

If only I knew what they were doing when they make this attempt, using the Exalted's statement: **"and the soul and what proportioned it, and inspired it with depravity or taqwā"** [al-Shams 91:7-8] and the Exalted's statement: **"We created man from a mingled drop to test him, and We made him hearing and seeing. We guided him on the Way, whether he is thankful or unthankful"** [al-Insān 76:3-3] and the Exalted's statement: **"Have we not given him two eyes, and a tongue and two lips and shown him the two highways?"** [al-Balad 90:8-10].

Then there is another domain, connected to this discussion, which needs to be examined and elucidated, but the scope of that discussion is in the fifth and final issue, so let us move on to it.

5. Decree (*qadā'*) and Predestination (*qadar*); what they both mean and the obligation to believe in them

The necessity to have faith in decree and predestination stems from two evidences:

The first of them is the authentic ḥadīth narrated by Muslim: {Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and predestination, the good of it and the bad of it.}

The second of them is what we have already explained in terms of Allah being described with knowledge and power, for decree is a branch of the attributes of knowledge and will being affirmed for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and predestination is a branch of the attributes of power being affirmed for Him.

Defining both of them:

As for decree, it is Allah's knowledge, Mighty and Majestic is He, in pre-eternity of all things according to how they will be in the future.

Predestination is the actual bringing into existence of those things according to His pre-eternal knowledge, which is attached to them.

Some people have inverted them and thus applied the definition of decree to predestination and the definition of predestination to decree, which is possible and a simple matter.

The meaning of the obligation to have faith in both of them – as is the position of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah – is that it is obligatory for those who are legally responsible to believe that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, knew from the beginning all the actions of His slaves and everything that is attached to His creations, including what will follow their occurrence in the future. Likewise, it is obligatory upon them to believe that He, Glorified and Exalted, only brought them into existence, when He

brought them into existence,⁽¹⁾ according to the specified predestination and the specific way that He already had knowledge of.

From this you know that decree and predestination are not connected to compulsion in any way, as some people imagine, because Allah, Glorified and Exalted (by virtue of His divinity) has to be all-knowing of the various actions that His slaves will carry out and of what will happen and take place in His dominion. If not, that would be an imperfection in His attributes, as we have mentioned. Furthermore, these matters must take place in accordance with Allah's knowledge of them, for if not His knowledge would be turned into ignorance, which is impossible.

It is clear that all of this does not mean that these actions are being carried out by people under some form of force or coercion or purely out of will and free choice, for you know that knowledge is only an unveiling attribute and its entire affair is to unveil matters as they are or as they will be, and it has no connection to coercion or allowing choice.

Al-Nawawī, may Allah have mercy on him, says in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, after defining decree and predestination just as we have mentioned,

'Al-Khaṭṭābī said, "Many people think that the meaning of decree and predestination is Allah, Glorified and Exalted, compelling and coercing the slave to act according to what He has predestined and decreed, but the truth is not what they imagine. Rather, the meaning is informing of Allah's advanced knowledge, Glorified and Exalted is He, of what the slave will earn and how these actions will stem from a calculation on his behalf"⁽²⁾.

(1) Allah bringing people's actions into existence does not necessitate them being compelled nor does it mean that they are stripped of choice, and this will be explained shortly.

(2) Al-Nawawī commenting on Muslim (1/154-155).

Ibn Ḥajar [al-Haytamī] mentioned in his commentary on the ḥadīth of Ibn 'Umar regarding faith, while defining decree, 'Decree is Allah's knowledge from the beginning of things as they are, while predestination is His bringing into existence of those things in accordance with His knowledge'⁽¹⁾.

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Allah being the Creator of man's actions does not strip him of choice:

Once you know this, someone might ask, 'Supposing that knowledge has no attachment to things except by way of unveiling them, as you have mentioned, is not the existence of the things that Allah has decreed will exist (i.e. He knew of their existence) by virtue of His creation and by virtue of His will? Therefore, the matter ends up at force and compulsion, if it is not attached to knowledge, and is thus attached to creation and will.

The answer is that everything is not brought into existence and not shaped and formed except by Allah's creation, may His majesty be manifest, nor is it completed except by His will, and we clarified this before. As for what arises in your mind as a result in terms of compulsion and coercion, its falsity has been made clear to you, in relation the issue of creation first and secondly in relation to the issue of will.

Allah's creations are divided into two categories:

The first category are the creations none of which earn anything, and they are everything that happens in the universe in the form of coercion and imposition, such as the movement of celestial bodies, the seasons and the growth of trees, plants and man, and then there are the many functions of man and his movements, such as sleep,

(1) *Fatḥ al-Mubīn bi Sharḥ al-Arba'īn*, p.64, also see *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* (2/292) and al-Sa'd's commentary on *al-'Aqā'id*, p.354.

wakefulness, shivering, death and the like. We have nothing to say about this category as there is no issue, especially considering the fact that you know that man is not legally responsible for any of these behaviours and actions or forced circumstances, and there is no reward or punishment attached to them.

The second category are the creations that involve acquisition being ascribed to man through his voluntary earning and striving, such as him engaging in eating, drinking and studying and the various actions and conducts that he chooses for himself, and there are some problematic issues connected to this.

First of all, know that man's voluntary actions are all Allah's creations, Mighty and Majestic is He, for Allah is the One Who creates in you your engaging in study and your turning away from it. He is the One Who creates in you all your behaviours and actions, both obedience and disobedience. This is established by clear rational evidence, for if any of these matters were not by Allah's creation and power He would not be described with the attributes of perfection. Instead, they would be by some independent influence from other than Him, and this is impossible for Allah. Likewise, you know from before the decisive transmitted proof, which is His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"He created everything and determined it most exactly"** [al-Furqān 25:2]. There is no doubt that actions are included amongst all things, and this is position of all of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

However, Allah creating your actions does not necessitate that you are forced to do them. There is no inseparability between the two except in what some people imagine.

This is because when you adopt a certain action, it depends on two matters; the existence of this action externally (i.e. the existence of all its essentials, material and immaterial) and then your acquisition of it by way of you proceeding towards it, for you are willing and

choosing to be described as earning and proceeding towards it, not to be described as creating and bringing into existence its essentials and elements.

To clarify this with a tangible illustration, you could say that the hand and what it contains in terms of life, veins, nerves and blood, and how it is described because of those things in terms of the ability to move – all of that is by Allah's creation, Mighty and Majestic is He. The page that is in front of you, in its image, its essence and its particular characteristics, is also from Allah's creation, and the existent capacity in the pen to write is also from Allah's creation, Mighty and Majestic is He.

All of these elements come together to bring into existence a written line on the page. There is no doubt that it, too, is by Allah's power and creation, Mighty and Majestic is He.

This is what we mean when we say that Allah is the Creator of man's actions.

However, is it attributed to you that you wrote a line on the page merely by bringing all these elements together? No. Indeed Allah creating all these elements does not mean that you wrote, and this is very clear. In order for the writing to come into existence because of you, you must have the resolve within yourself to write and your will must proceed towards implementing it. At that point, Allah the Exalted allows the strength that Allah has granted your hand to obey with, along with the veins and the arteries, to assist you in your intention. He allows the ink to flow as you want it to and the page to be affected by it according to how it is written on. This is when you can be called a writer and the earning of this action can be attributed to you, despite Allah, Mighty and Majestic, being the Creator of it. In other words, the intention, the resolve and the earning are from you (and this is by the secret of will that Allah has placed inside you) while the creation of the action and both its near and far means are

from Allah the Exalted. Prosecution and reckoning is only based on intention and acquisition, not on creation of the ways and means and the creation of the action itself.

We all know this reality in our social and legal lives, for prosecution is only based on acquisition and not on the essence of the independent action. The one who knocks someone over with his car and kills him is not prosecuted for the action, because he is not the one who actually did the action. Rather, it is the car that carried out the action. However, he is prosecuted based on the acquisition. The one who brings workers and they dig a basin or well in the middle of the road is not punished for destroying a public road because he did it but because he acquired it. The one who puts a bottle of poison in place of a bottle of medicine that is next to a patient, which the patient then consumes and dies, is prosecuted and punished, even though he is not the one who did the action. Rather, he is the one who acquired the action and became involved in it.

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, only prosecutes and reckons His slaves based on this thing called acquisition,⁽¹⁾ i.e. the psychical proceeding towards being involved in the action. Have you not noticed the Exalted's statement: **"Allah does not impose on any soul any more than it can stand. For it, is what it has earned; against it, what it has merited"** [al-Baqarah 2:286] and His statement: **"Every soul shall be repaid today for what it earned"** [Ghāfir 40:17] and His statement: **"What confronts them will be the evil actions that they earned"** [al-Zumar 39:48] and His statement: **"Those who earn wrong action will be repaid for what they perpetrated"** [al-An'ām 6:120], and so many other verses that state that the basis for reward and punishment is only man's earning, i.e. his proceeding towards the thing that Allah has commanded or forbidden. Allah only wanted to make His creating and His power in accordance with their

(1) (tn): or earning (Ar. *kasb*).

proceeding, so that that could have the function of a record in which these proceedings are affirmed and embodied in the manifestation of the action that came out of it.

You therefore know that the attribute of creation is attached to everything the existence of which Allah knew and still knows, and none of that necessitates some imagined coercion or compulsion.

As for His knowledge of the existence of the creations and actions necessitating His will being attached to them, it is clear that there is no problematic issue in relation to the first category of creations. As for the second category, which are the creations that involve acquisition based on man's choice, you know from what we have mentioned regarding the fourth issue that Allah's will, Mighty and Majestic is He, is attached to creating the secret of will in your being, and it necessitates, as you know, that the Divine Will be attached to what you choose from the affairs and actions by virtue of this will that He has granted you. However, this does not necessitate that you are under compulsion and have no choice. Otherwise, there would be a contradiction between our saying that He has granted you the secret of will with which you proceed towards choosing actions and our saying that what you choose by virtue of this will is a coerced action that you do involuntarily. We explained this position in detail in this discussion when we clarified the fourth issue, the one before this one, so you can go back to it if you want to.

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Perhaps after that you will ask, 'But Allah says in His Book: **"If He had wished, He could have guided every one of you"** [an-Nahl 16:9] He also says, **"If your Lord had willed, all the people on the earth would have believed. Do you think you can force people to be believers?"** [Yūnus 10:99] And there are other verses in the Qur'ān that have this meaning, and this affirms that man's will is a prisoner in Allah's grasp, Mighty and Majestic is He.

The answer is that these verses that you are interested in have nothing to do with our discussion. Rather, they clarify another, completely separate fact regarding which there is no doubt and no dispute, and it is that if Allah, Mighty and Majestic, had wanted He would have granted all of humanity some kindness and make all of them choose faith and be inclined towards the truth, without responding to any of their passions and frivolities or the whisperings or their demons, or them being led to certainty of the truth by force without them having any choice. However, that is not what He willed. Rather, He wanted to let man choose between two realities pulling at him, and they are the ego with its passions and the intellect with its planning, so that the meaning of struggle and legal responsibility can be manifested in his obedience to Allah. If not, those who struggle and stay upright upon obedience would not attain any reward for their struggle, as struggle in that case would have no foundation.

This is what these verses are expressing, so what is the connection between this meaning and the topic that we have affirmed, i.e. man having choice and free will with regards to voluntary actions and behaviours?

Man's will is subject to Allah's kindnesses and His hatred:

However, after all of this, you should know that that your will that is between your two sides is exposed to influences from Allah's kindnesses, Mighty and Majestic is He, and His punishment, for Allah shows kindness to many a man and thus gives him the enabling success to desire goodness and proceed towards the path of truth. Allah also encompasses many a man with His punishment in the life of this world and thus his will is blinded from everything except evil and he does not direct his intention except towards the means of wretchedness. However, Allah's standard practice with His slaves continues to be that that kindness has specific reasons that man earns, and that this punishment has other reasons that man exposes himself to.

Thus, whoever has the firm resolve from the very beginning that they will not stubbornly resist the truth if they see it and they will not render the intellect that Allah gave them useless, such that when such a person believes in Allah and realises that He is God and he is His slave and he starts extending his hands in humility towards Him and He asks Him by turning towards Him in broken, tremulous supplication, asking Him to help him with His commands, to give him enabling success to adhere to His laws, to add to his strength care from His mercy – this will person will realise Allah's kindnesses and His attention. He will add more strength to his strength from His enabling success and He will increase his intellect with more intellect from His guidance, and He will place the meaning of firm resolve and persistence in His will. Regarding these people, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says, **"He increases in guidance those who are already guided and gives them their taqwā"** [Muḥammad 47:17] He also says, **"Allah augments those who are guided by giving them greater guidance"** [Maryam 19:76] He also says, **"By it, Allah guides those who follow what pleases Him to the ways of Peace. He will bring them from the darkness to the light"** [al-Mā'idah 5:16] He also says, **"But as for those who believe and do right actions, their Lord will guide them by their faith"** [Yūnus 10:9] He also says in a *ḥadīth qudsī*⁽¹⁾, {O My slaves, all of you are astray apart from those I guide, so seek guidance from Me and I will guide you}⁽²⁾. What is important is to know that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has made, from the veracity of man directing himself towards knowing the truth and then from the manifestations of his humility towards Him and his supplication of him, a second intellect that He grants concerning the realisation of Allah's divinity and inclination to the truth that lies behind it.

(1) (tn): i.e. a *ḥadīth* in which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, quotes Allah but it is not from the Qur'ān.

(2) Related by Muslim, Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah.

As for the person who has the firm resolve from the very beginning that he will stubbornly reject whatever principles or behaviours he does not like, even if they are essentially true, and that he will ignore the inspiration of the intellect that is in his head and will only heed the call of his passions and desires, and then he continues to make his soul travel this path in accordance with this firm resolve and determination, informing anyone who tries to remind him of any portion of the Divine Truth that he decided beforehand that he would not understand anything coming to him in this regard – then indeed Allah's standard practice regarding such people is to throw them into more rational temptations and misguidances, to confuse their wills such that the blazes and flames of their passions and desires flare up and to test them with more aversion to the warnings of those who remind and Allah's signs in creation. Our Lord, may His majesty be manifest, says about these people: **"Who could do greater wrong than someone who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and turns away from them, forgetting all that he has done before? We have placed covers on their hearts, preventing them from understanding it, and heaviness in their ears. Though you call them to guidance, they will nonetheless never be guided"** [al-Kahf 18:57]. He also says, **"I will divert from my signs all those who are arrogant in the earth without any right. Even if they see every Sign, they will not believe in it. If they see the way of right guidance, they will not take it as a way. But if they see the way of error, they will take that as a way"** [al-'A'rāf 7:146]. He also says, "He misguides many by it and guides many by it. But He only misguides the deviators." He also says, "Allah would never misguide a people after guiding them until He had made it clear to them how to have taqwā" [al-Tawbah 9:115].

This divine standard practice is the applied explanation of the Exalted's statement: **"Allah misguides whomever He wills and**

guides whomever He wills" [Fāṭir 35:7] and His statement: **"Anyone misguided by Allah has no guide"** [al-Ra'd 13:33]. In other words, nothing can prevent Allah from placing the means of forced guidance in the heart of the most misguided of disbelievers and renegades and from placing the means of misguidance in the heart of the most righteous of His believing slaves, but He the Glorified prescribed for Himself (as grace and beneficence from Him) that He would not misguide people except for those who turn towards the means of temptation and turn away from ways and means of misguidance, and that He would bring near the means of guidance and enabling success to everyone who has the firm resolve to responds to Allah's command and His commandments, and extends the hand of slavehood towards Him, asking Him for help and assistance.

Indeed, it is often the case that some portion of righteous deeds is done by someone who is misguided and iniquitous, in a moment in which his humanity and natural disposition is awakened, and that is a means of Allah guiding him and an immense factor in changing the course of his life.

And it is often the case that some portion of wretched deeds, evil in the sight of Allah, is done by a righteous man. He commits it without being mindful of it. Then, afterwards, he does not feel anything that would call him to repent for him and regret what he had done. Thus, it is a means of Allah's hatred for him and a major factor in changing the course of his life the other way.

This is what is meant by his statement, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in the authentic ḥadīth: {By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, indeed one of you will do the actions of the people of Paradise until there is nothing between him and it except a cubit. Then the Book catches up with him and He does the actions of the people of the Fire and thus enters it. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, indeed one of you will do the actions of the people of the

Fire until there is nothing between him and it except a cubit. Then the Book catches up with him and He does the actions of the people of the Paradise and thus enters it.} [Agreed upon]

* * *

Finally, you may have heard, after everything we have mentioned to you, words that are repeated by some Sufis nowadays and which books have transmitted from some of the prominent people amongst them, and it is that man does not own anything in reality and that he is nothing but a feather in the wind, and thus he is steered in all of his affairs and actions in the grip of the Divine Command. All the phenomena of people and their circumstances that we see; all of that is nothing but shades of what Allah has decreed for them. You will find them frequently repeating these words and citing this statement of the Exalted as proof: **"And you did not throw when you threw; it was Allah who threw"** [al-Anfāl 8:17].

Know that these words are not supported by anything in terms of the proof, knowledge and divine information from which the pure Revealed Law is brought forth. Rather, they go back (according to the righteous amongst these people) to states that afflict them due to intense contemplation of Allah's sublimity and thus because of that they drown in a state of bewilderment and distraction from their own selves, and this is what makes them utter these words. In reality, they are not a scientific affirmation of their intellects have arrived at but rather a psychical description of this bewilderment that has afflicted them and encompassed their senses. As for the others amongst them, their position is that these words go back to mere imitation and emulation of them. By my life, if the former are excused for what they said because of the state they were in, then the latter are not excused by relying on simply imitating them.

Nevertheless, those who ascended above the level of these states, the great Sufis, may Allah be pleased with them, they never said

words like these, and they adhered to nothing but what the outward of the texts indicated and had been affirmed by the scientific proof that the generality Muslims had agreed to follow. It did not escape these people, may Allah be pleased with them, that Allah the Exalted's statement: **"And you did not throw when you threw; it was Allah who threw"** [al-Anfāl 8:17] is only referring to a specific event that was one of the miracles that Allah brought into effect at the hands of His Messenger, and that was when he took a handful of pebbles and threw them in the faces of the idol-worshippers during the Battle of the Trench. Whilst in the air, they increased in number until they filled the eyes of the idol-worshippers. Thus, the verse is drawing attention to this event that appeared in front of people's eyes with the manifestation of the handful that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, threw towards them. In reality, it is nothing more than a miracle with which Allah ennobled His Messenger and the believers, so where is this in connection to the generality of actions and behaviours which Allah has made possible for man through the motive of will that He has placed in their souls?

After this, I do not think we need any further clarification regarding this topic.

* * *

4. Seeing Allah the Exalted

Know that this is an issue in which there has been a dispute between the majority of Muslims and some Islamic cults, and the cause of the dispute that has happened is that it is not connected to decisive, definitive evidences like all other creedal issues. This is why the difference of opinion therein does not necessitate disbelief or apostasy, even though differing with Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah – and they are the majority of Muslims – necessitates iniquity and deviation from the truth.

The discussion of this issue has three parts:

The first part discusses seeing Allah, Mighty and Majestic, in terms of what the intellect deems possible and impossible.

The second part asks: does hearing (heard evidences)⁽¹⁾ indicate that it will happen in the Hereafter?

The third part asks: does hearing indicate that it happens or that it can happen in this world?

* * *

As for the first part, the Mu'tazilah went with the position that the intellect absolutely does not deem it possible for the slaves to see their Lord. Indeed, it determines it to be impossible. The majority of Muslims, and they are Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, have made consensus that this is something possible and that the intellect does not deem the slaves seeing their Lord, may His majesty be manifest, with the eyes in their heads, as impossible.

As for the specious argument of the Mu'tazilah, its substance is that seeing is nothing but the impression of the image of the thing seen on the pupil, and a condition of that is that the thing seen be

(1) (tn): i.e. textual evidences from the Book and Sunnah.

confined to a specific direction within space so that the pupil can be directed towards it, and it is known with certainty that Allah the Exalted is not a body and is not limited to any direction.

As for the evidence of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, it is that seeing is more general than being the impression of the image of thing seen on the pupil, as the Mu'tazilah say, along with the conditions that should be present in the pupil and the conditions that should be present in the thing seen.

Rather, it is a capability that Allah makes in man whenever He wants and however He wants, with the image of the thing seen being observed as it truly is. The manner in which seeing is achieved today is only one manner of many and Allah, Mighty and Majestic, was and still is capable of connecting the reality of seeing to whichever one of them He wants. Thus, it is possible for Him to be unveiled to His slaves just as the moon is unveiled on the nights it is full, as is mentioned in the authentic ḥadīths, and it is possible for them to truly see His essence with no uncertainty therein. This seeing will happen, if Allah so wills, without any of the conditions that are needed to see today. As al-Jalāl al-Duwānī says, 'It is not imperative that those conditions that are a condition for our perception in this life be a condition in the next life'⁽¹⁾.

As for the second part, which is the transmitted evidences, do they contain that which indicates that the slaves will see their Lord? The Mu'tazilah went with the position that there is nothing in the transmitted evidences that affirms that the slaves will see their Lord. Rather, they contain that which affirms that it is not possible for them to see Him, and their pillar in this is Allah the Exalted's statement quoting Mūsā, blessings and peace be upon him: **"My Lord, show Yourself to me so that I may look at You." He said, 'You will not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place,**

(1) *Sharḥ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Duwānī* (2/168).

then you will see Me.' But when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Mūsā fell unconscious to the ground" [al-'A'rāf 7:143] and the rest of the verse. They said, 'Allah answered Mūsā's question about seeing by saying, 'You will not see Me' – it contains negation of seeing, as is obvious – and then He negated it in another way, which is that He attached seeing to the mountain remaining firm in its place, and Allah, Mighty and Majestic, knew that it would not remain firm in its place and that it would be crushed flat. Thus, He attached seeing to something that is impossible in reality, and thus seeing Him is also impossible.' On account of the strengthening of this meaning and its emphasis, al-Zamakhsharī (who was of the Mu'tazilah) explained the word *lan*⁽¹⁾ to mean permanent negation in order to complete the indication of the verse and have it mean that seeing Him is negated in both this world and the Hereafter, and we do not think anyone other than al-Zamakhsharī explained *lan* to mean permanent negation.

They also use as evidence to negate seeing Him the Exalted's statement: **"Eyesight cannot perceive Him, but He perceives eyesight"** [al-An'ām 6:103] They said, 'Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has negated that anyone will ever perceive Him with their eyes, and perceiving with eyes is seeing.'

The generality of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have gone with the position that seeing Him is necessary and affirmed by transmission, for there are many transmitted evidences that affirm it, such as Allah's statement, Glorified and Exalted is He: **"Faces that day will be radiant, looking at their Lord"** [al-Qiyāmah 75:22-23] and His statement, Glorified and Exalted is He: **"No indeed! Rather that Day they will be veiled from their Lord"** [al-Muṭaffifīn 83:15], i.e. they will not see Him as a punishment for them, and it indicates that the righteous from amongst His slaves will therefore see Him as a way

(1) (tn): i.e. the particle used in Arabic to negate a verb in the future.

confined to a specific direction within space so that the pupil can be directed towards it, and it is known with certainty that Allah the Exalted is not a body and is not limited to any direction.

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Rather, it is a capability that Allah makes in man whenever He wants and however He wants, with the image of the thing seen being observed as it truly is. The manner in which seeing is achieved today is only one manner of many and Allah, Mighty and Majestic, was and still is capable of connecting the reality of seeing to whichever one of them He wants. Thus, it is possible for Him to be unveiled to His slaves just as the moon is unveiled on the nights it is full, as is mentioned in the authentic ḥadīths, and it is possible for them to truly see His essence with no uncertainty therein. This seeing will happen, if Allah so wills, without any of the conditions that are needed to see today. As al-Jalāl al-Duwānī says, 'It is not imperative that those conditions that are a condition for our perception in this life be a condition in the next life'⁽¹⁾.

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(1) (tn): i.e. the particle used in Arabic to negate a verb in the future.

of honouring them. There is also his statement, blessings and peace be upon him, in the authentic ḥadīth that al-Bukhārī has related: {Indeed you will see your Lord as you see the moon on the night it is full.} Due to the clarity of these evidences, the generality of the Companions made consensus seeing Him will happen in the Hereafter.

As for His statement: **“You will not see Me...”** [al-‘A‘rāf 7:143] and the rest of the verse, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah have said that it is evidence that seeing Him will happen and not the opposite, as the Mu‘tazilah understand, and that is for two reasons:

The first is that Mūsā would not have requested to see Allah, Mighty and Majestic, unless he knew that it was something possible and something that could happen and take place. It would not be conceivable for him to imagine that something like this is possible while at the same time being mistaken for imagining it. If seeing Allah were impossible, our master Mūsā, blessings and peace be upon him, would know it better than the Mu‘tazilah, as that is something that is consistent with the perfection of the Prophets and their infallibility and what Allah has ennobled them with by way of knowledge, inspiration and perception of the truth.

The second is that Allah the Exalted attached seeing Him to something that is conceivable, which is the mountain remaining firm in its place, as it is matter that is essentially possible by necessity, as is known, and whatever is attached to something possible is also something possible⁽¹⁾.

Lan is not used for permanent negation, as al-Zamakhsharī claimed, but for emphasis, and that is why it is sometimes qualified with *abadan*.⁽²⁾ If it is established that it is for permanent negation, then it only applies to this life, as in the Exalted’s statement: **“But they will never long for it because of what they have done”** [al-Baqarah 2:95],

(1) Al-Jalāl al-Duwānī (2/166) and *al-Masā’il al-Khamsūn* by al-Rāzī (372).

(2) (tn): i.e. ‘ever’ or ‘never’.

even they will long for death in the Hereafter so that they can escape punishment⁽¹⁾.

Due to the clarity of these evidences, the generality of Muslims have come to an agreement (with the exception of the Mu‘tazilah) that the righteous from amongst Allah’s slaves will see Allah, Mighty and Majestic, on the Day of Standing. On account of this, many of those who draw near to Allah have hung their hopes, out of all the blessings of Paradise, on seeing Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and they live in this world wishing for no other blessing of the Hereafter apart from it.

Al-Rabī‘, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned that he was with al-Shāfi‘ī one day when a letter came from Upper Egypt in which the writer was asking about His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **“No indeed! Rather that Day they will be veiled from their Lord”** [al-Muṭaffifin 83:15] He wrote in response, ‘Some people being veiled out of His wrath indicates that some people will see Him out of His pleasure.’ Al-Rabī‘ said to him, ‘Is this what you believe, my master?’ He replied, ‘By Allah, if Muḥammad ibn Idrīs were not absolutely certain that he was going to see his Lord in the Hereafter, he would not worship Him in this life’⁽²⁾.

* * *

As for the third part, which asks whether or not the transmitted evidences indicate that seeing Him happens or that it can happen for someone in this life, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah have differed into schools of thought:

There are those who have said that the transmitted evidences do not indicate anything other than the fact that seeing Him is in the Hereafter only. Indeed, what the transmitted evidences show is that no one will see their Lord before death, and that is due to the *marfū’* ḥadīth⁽³⁾ that

(1) Al-Jalāl al-Duwānī (2/181).

(2) *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* by al-Subkī.

(3) (tn): i.e. a report that is specifically attributed to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whether continuous or otherwise.

Muslim has related on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {Know that you will not see your Lord until you die}. The leader of those who state this position from amongst the Companions is our lady 'Ā'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, for al-Bukhārī has related, as well as others, on the authority of Masrūq, who said, 'I said to 'Ā'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, "Dear mother, did Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, see his Lord?" She replied, "My hair stood up because of what you said. There are three matters whoever says them to you has lied: whoever says to you that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saw his Lord has lied." Then she recited, **"Eyesight cannot perceive Him, but He perceives eyesight. He is the All-Penetrating, the All-Aware"** [al-An'ām 6:103]. **"It does not befit Allah to address any human being except by inspiration, or from behind a veil"** [al-Shūrā 42:51] **"Whoever says you that he knows what will happen tomorrow has lied"** Then she recited, **"And no self knows what it shall earn tomorrow"** [Luqmān 42:34]. **"Whoever says to you that he has concealed anything has lied"**, and she recited the Exalted's statement: **"O Messenger! Convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord"** [al-Mā'idah 5:67]. **"However, he saw Jibrīl, peace be upon him, in his true form twice"**.

The majority have gone with the position that the transmitted texts indicate that it is possible to see Allah the Exalted in the abode of this world, and the leader of those who state this position is 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, along with the majority of the Companions. One of their most important evidences for this is the ḥadīth of the Night Journey and the Ascension and Allah the Exalted's statement: **"We only appointed the vision We showed you as a trial and temptation for the people"** [al-Isrā' 17:60] as well as several other ḥadīths on the topic.

The first party disputed the validity of using this verse as evidence drawing the conclusion that "the vision"⁽¹⁾, i.e. with the definite article, is referring to what people see in their sleep, not reality. However, the answer to this is that just as the expression "the vision" applies to when one is asleep, it also applies to when one is awake, without making any distinction. This is why the poet said,

Glorify because of the vision and delight his heart

And give glad tidings to a heart that was very confused

They also responded by saying that the Exalted called this vision a temptation for the people, i.e. a test and a tribulation for them, and it does not make to sense to say that a vision in one's sleep was the cause of people's faith being tested and examined.

Furthermore, as long as this issue was differed over amongst the Companions themselves then there is nothing, in terms of our theology, that calls us for to decisively affirm one of the two positions, even though we incline therein towards the position of the majority of the Companions and then the imams and scholars that came after them, which is that the transmitted texts do indicate that it is possible to see Allah, Mighty and Majestic in the world. Indeed, the also indicate that it happened to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

This is the last thing that you must know of the realities of divinity, and all of them come under the testimony of 'there is no god but Allah', which is the first half of the two testimonies with which a Muslim's Islam and faith are completed.

As for the second half, which is the testimony that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, all the discussions about prophecy come under it and it is what we will move on to discussing now.

* * *

(1) Ar. *al-ru'yā*.

Part Two: Prophethood

Introduction

Now we have finished our discussion regarding Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, and we have seen how the intellect does not hesitate to have faith in the existence of a planner of the universe, one who is control of its affair, and we have learned the particular characteristics and attributes that the Sublime Creator is described with – is it within our capacity to ask about our function in this existence? If we ask about it, is it within our capacity to imagine that we have no function, and that there is no responsibility attached to us? Can the intellect accept – after everything we have discussed regarding faith in Allah and that He is planning and He is All-Wise – that we have no affair in this world other than the affair of beasts and other animals? Are we to just enjoy ourselves and be happy eating, drinking, wearing clothes and enjoying marital relations, for either a short or long period of time, after which we will be swallowed by the hollow of destruction and death? Is that which distinguishes man from all other beings, i.e. the intellect, which seeks to uncover the depths of the universe in its various manifestations, nothing other than some phenomenon that coincidentally distinguishes from everything else, and thus, beyond that, nothing else is of any concern to you?

Indeed, any sane person cannot (after finishing the discussion on faith in the existence of the Creator) conceive of any of these hypotheses, let alone be firmly convinced of them or adopt them. This sane person knows that one of the most prominent attributes of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is that He is All-Wise in His creating and in all His rulings and that frivolity cannot be conceived of Him, so what frivolity would be more frivolous than this universe, which is arranged to the utmost perfection and then subjugated for man to the utmost subjugation because of the amazing secret that has

been placed in him and which man is still bewildered at – ending up, eventually, at nothing, gradually breaking up with no purpose?

This man, who lives in Allah the Exalted's universe, deifies himself and shows himself to be proud, intoxicated by the divine gifts that have been placed in his being. He transgresses against his fellow man by way of killing and oppression and all other forms of injustice and tyranny, while this other person lives in a state of helplessness, oppressed under his authority and force. The only thing he experiences in this life is distress and suffering, while at the same time this other person experiences nothing but luxury and comfort – are both of their stories going to end at the covers of death, without there being after it any conclusion in which rights are returned to where they belong and the supremacy of justice over oppression and tyranny is manifested? Has anyone ever seen a theatrical play performed in front of an audience in which there is only one part, after which the curtain drops down and the story ends but the events still have not been resolved and concluded, the audience is still thinking about and expecting an explanation of what is vague and a conclusion of what is still fragmented and they are still in suspense as to how the story will end and how its writer will finish it?

A sane child at school would not write a play like this, so would Allah, the All-Wise, the Totally Aware, establish the story of this universe of His on such astounding frivolity, which even children do not engage in?

I have seen nothing more astonishing than the phenomenon of a sane person thinking at length about the universe until he says, 'There must be a "supernatural force" behind this existence', and then he does not think about doing any more research and instead turns towards his work and his leisure.

Is this nothing other than the like of someone who seeks shelter at night in a cave cut out of a mountain, lights a fire and then looks

around at the ground and the sides of the caves and then sees some bones with remnants of eaten flesh on them, so he shakes his head and says, 'There must be a predator who rests here and eats his prey here', and then closes off his thoughts from any further reflection and contemplation, reclines on his side on that ground and then closes his eye in order to fall into a deep sleep?

A person who has not been guided to the existence of the Creator and the Planner of this universe might be excused, and thus he continues to grovel on his face in the waves of life, even though he is not excused for not seeking the means of guidance. As for the one who has realised the existence of what is called "the supernatural force", this realisation should (in what the intellect of every thinker understands) place him in front of a long road that has a new contemplation, and he should travel along this road with the utmost, seriousness, precision and caution.

A "supernatural force"⁽¹⁾ brought you into existence and brought this universe into existence! Should not the affair of this force make you sleepless and the extent to which it could have authority over you? Should you not contemplate and research at length until you are assured that you are not responsible towards it in anything? How can you imagine that you are not responsible towards it for anything (and you are the sole creation in which the secret of thought and intellect has been placed) when at the same time you can see your partners from amongst the other creations, who are less than you in everything, each bearing a specific responsibility, and thus they carry

(1) We have put this expression in quotation marks because it is a false expression. It is not permissible to use it to refer to the essence of Allah the Exalted because Allah is not a supernatural force. Rather, He is described with supernatural force and all the attributes of perfection. Likewise, Allah the Exalted is not "love" and He is not "peace" as some people say. However, we quote the words of these people verbatim in order to illustrate the state that they are in, and quoting their words indicates their falsity in terms of both form and content.

them out continuously without slacking and without wearying?

In order to clarify this important fact and emphasise it, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, in His address to us, repeatedly draws our attention to the fact that He the Exalted could not have created man for no purpose, in order for him to amuse himself for a few days and then die. He appeals to the intellects to be aware of this obvious fact:

“Did you suppose that we created you for amusement and that you would not be returned to Us? Exalted be Allah, the King, the True Lord. There is no god but Him, Lord of the Noble Throne” [al-Mu'minūn 23:115-116].

“We did not create heaven and earth and everything in between them as a game. If we had desired to have some amusement, We would have derived it from Our Presence, if indeed we were to do so” [al-Anbiyā' 21:16-17].

If you have realized this fact, after your faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, then you must seriously look into the consequences for you in terms of a function and a responsibility towards your Sublime Creator, who has not restricted Himself to making you just a creation from amongst many creations. Rather, he has made you the master of these creations and given you the reins to subjugate them and the keys to many of them, such that if you know your function in the universe, you will buckle down to the job of executing your function and co-operating with all of these existent beings in carrying out the jobs and duties that have been entrusted to each of them.

And so that you do not, O man, remain confused for a long period of time, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has sent Messengers to this cream of the crop that has been chosen from amongst His creation and they convey Allah's commands and prohibitions to them and they communicate to them His Revealed Law and His rulings. They warn them that there is another life waiting for them after death and

that they will be rewarded therein, without doubt, for everything they earned in this life, whether good or bad.

Let us thus discuss the affair of these Prophets and Messengers and what they have been sent with, as well as the scientific indications of their veracity and they veracity of what they have been sent with and the corroborations that corroborate them, so that we know very well the limits of the responsibility that his hanging around man's neck and the indisputable evidence for its affirmation and for the necessity of it being adhered to.

In the discussion of ours we will deal with the following issues:

1. Verifying the meaning of Prophethood and Messengership and defining both of them.
2. The Prophets whom Allah the Exalted has sent and the necessity to believe in them.
3. The attributes and particular characteristics of the Prophet.
4. Miracles: defining them, the necessity to have firm conviction in them and the position of the intellect and science regarding them.
5. Prophethood does not come about by way of earning or advancement.

* * *

1. Verifying the meaning of Prophethood and Messengership And defining both of them

Prophethood (*al-nabuwah*) comes from the word *nab'*, which means information,⁽¹⁾ and it means the conveyance of information from Allah by way of revelation to someone who has been chosen from His slaves to receive it. Thus, the word is an explanation of the relationship that exists between the Prophet and the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, and it is a relationship of revelation and informing.

Messengership (*al-risālah*) means Allah making one of His slaves legally responsible for conveying a Revealed Law or specific ruling to others. Thus, the word is an explanation of the relationship that exists between the Prophet and the rest of mankind, and it is a relationship of delegating and sending.

When you notice in a Prophet the situation that exists between him and Allah, Mighty and Majestic, that is Prophethood. When you notice the situation that exists between him and mankind, that is Messengership. From this perspective, Prophethood is nobler than Messengership because Messengership explains a connection between a Messenger and mankind while Prophethood explains a connection between him and his Lord, Mighty and Majestic.

The difference between Prophethood and Messengership:

This is a discussion that is based on personal reasoning,⁽²⁾ and thus does not come under the category of decisive facts that are

(1) Ar. *khabr*, which can also mean 'news'.

(2) Ar. *Ijtihād*.

agreed upon, and this is why there has been some difference of opinion between the scholars, which is: do the words Prophet and Messenger have the same meaning or do they differ in meaning such that someone can be a Prophet without being a Messenger?

A group of scholars have gone with the position that the two words are synonymous and mean the same thing, and thus every Prophet is called a Messenger and every Messenger is called a Prophet. However, he is called a Messenger in view of what between him and mankind and he is called a Prophet in view of what is between him and Allah. The two terms are inseparable, and amongst those who held this position is Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ of the Mālikīs and others.

The majority have gone with the position that one is a subset of the other, for a Prophet is whoever has received something from Allah via revelation, regardless of whether he has been commanded to convey it to others. If he has been commanded to convey it to others, for example a law or book has been revealed to him that he must convey to people, then he is a Messenger as well. Based on this, every Messenger is a Prophet, as being a Messenger to people is a branch of being a Prophet from Allah, but not every Prophet is a Messenger, for he could receive revelation but not be commanded to convey it⁽¹⁾.

Both sides have evidences from the outward purport of the Book and Sunnah, and we do not need to present any of them in this regard or go into a lengthy discussion in order to show preference. This is because the matter is simple as long as the discussion, as we have said, is not connected to any of the decisive and necessary issues of the religion. Rather, it is a branch issue that involves personal reasoning and more than one possibility.

(1) See the supercommentary of al-Marjānī on the commentary of al-Jalāl al-Duwānī on *al-'Aqā'id al-'Aḍadiyyah* (1-12) and other books of theology.

Defining each of them:

Based on this, we can define both a Prophet and a Messenger as 'a person whom Allah reveals to via Jibrīl to convey to all people or a group of them a matter from Allah, may His majesty be manifest. If Allah reveals to him with a matter but does not command him to convey it then he is only a Prophet.'

If you contemplate this definition, whose contents all Muslims have agreed upon and there are decisive evidences to support them, as we will demonstrate, you will know the following:

First of all, what is meant by revelation⁽¹⁾ here is not that which comprises inspiration and internal feelings or what is called perspicacity and intuition, even though the word *wahī* is used to refer to all of the above in people's conversations and conventions. The verification of this will be discussed soon.

Secondly, this revelation has no scope for being initiated except in a state of complete wakefulness. Thus, visions and dreams have no connection to the affirmation of Prophethood or divine revelation, which is considered the first pillar of Prophethood. If the evidences for Prophethood have already been established for us, then the subsequent dreams of Prophets are considered revelation as long as no revelation comes in a wakeful state that contradicts it or refutes it.

Studying this issue is something that does not accommodate any probability or debate (for the one who already believes in the existence of Allah, may His majesty be manifest). This is why the contents of the term 'Divine Messengership' is something that all groups and parties of Muslims agree upon and having firm conviction in it is one of the foundations that one must have faith in in order to perfect one's faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic. This is due to the overflowing decisive evidences that affirm this in both the Book and the Sunnah.

(1) Ar. *wahī*.

Thus, if you, after that, come across new (modernist) definitions for a Prophet or revelation that contradict that which we have quoted from all the books of Islamic theology, which in their rulings rely on sureties based on the evidences of the Book and Sunnah – then know that this is a conspiracy and behind it is whatever is behind it, or it is some profound weakness in the faith of the writer or the speaker, or it is abysmal ignorance of the clearest facts of Islam.

If you know this, you will not be enchanted or deceived by the astonishing definition that Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh invented for a Prophet, and this is in what has been quoted by the great scholar and teacher Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī from his remarks on the commentary of al-Jalāl al-Duwānī on *al-'Aqā'id al-'Aḍadiyyah* on the second page, where he said, 'I say: a Prophet is defined as someone who has a natural disposition towards the truth in both knowledge and action. In other words, he only knows what is true and he only does what is true in accordance with wisdom, and this is from his natural disposition, i.e. he does not need contemplation or reflection but divine instruction. If he also has a natural disposition to call his people to what he is naturally disposed towards, then he is also a Messenger.' You do not need me to make any remark regarding this astonishing definition for the meaning of Prophethood, after you know its meaning as indicated by the Book and indicated the Sunnah and what Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have made consensus on. Likewise, you do not need me to unveil to you the secret that prompted him to use the term 'natural disposition' in his definition as opposed to the word 'revelation', which all Muslims – from the age of Prophethood until today – have agreed to adopt as a fundamental condition in defining a Prophet.

Despite that, let us mention a few words regarding 'the phenomenon of revelation' in the life of the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, so that by doing so you can know, after contemplating therein, the extent to which heretics and professional doubters have fallen into confusion, insanity and disarray while analysing this

phenomenon. How can this not be the case when they run away from and distance themselves from the scientific way of researching the most basic of its manifestations and forms and are pleased for themselves to submit to any surmise, guesswork or conjecture as long as it distances them from acknowledging the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him.

We do not want from you, and you are contemplating this discussion and its reality and how the enemies of the Islamic creed avoid it, to have anything but intellectual freedom that is free from any subordination or prejudice or caprice in your ego.

* * *

The phenomenon of revelation:

Revelation is the first foundation upon whose reality is established the meaning of Prophethood and Messengership, and therefore it is the primary source for all the information of the unseen, matters of creed and rulings of legislation, and that is because the fact of 'revelation' is the sole decisive criterion between the person who thinks from himself and legislates by means of his opinion and intellect and the person who conveys from his Lord without changing anything and without adding or taking anything away.

On account of this, the enemies of Islam are concerned with the treating the subject of revelation in his life, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and expending onerous intellectual effort, in burdening themselves and striving cunningly, in order to complicate its reality and mix it with inspiration and internal speech, and indeed even epilepsy. That is because they know that the subject of 'revelation' is the source of certainty for Muslim and their faith in what Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought from Allah. If it made possible to give Muslims doubt about its reality then it will be possible to make them disbelieve in all the doctrines

and rulings that branch out from it. It will also be possible for them to induce them to listen to the notion that everything Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, called to, all the legislative principles and rulings, is nothing but from his own thinking.

In order to realise this objective, the professional practitioners of the ideological attack started trying to interpret the phenomenon of revelation and distance it from what the historians relate to us regarding it as well as the noble and authentic Sunnah⁽¹⁾. Likewise, they try to divest it of its obvious reality and each one of them travels his own path, following whatever kinds of false and strange ideas please his imagination.

Thus, there is the one who imagines that Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did not stop thinking...until the path of gradual, continuous unveiling formed within him a creed that he saw as guaranteeing the end of idol worship. Then there is the one who prefers to spread the remark that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, learned the Qur'ān and the principles of Islam from Baḥīrā the monk, and then there is the one who says that it is not this or that but rather that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was a nervous man or afflicted with epilepsy⁽²⁾.

I firmly believe that it is the right of any sane person to hasten and ask about the scientific proofs that these imaginers have relied on to affirm these claims of theirs regarding revelation and its reality, especially as they are the ones who accuse us, as you know, of basing our religious researches on the foundations of dogma and not science. Where is the science or even the semblance of science in their researches?

As for us, we say that the source of the word 'revelation' is the life

(1) (tn): i.e. what has reached us regarding the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in terms of his actions, statements, what was done in his presence without him objecting as well as his physical and moral characteristics.

(2) See *Hāḍir al-Ālim al-Islāmī* (1/28-29).

of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, is the information that has been transmitted to us by way of the Qur'ān and by way of the Prophetic Biography and the authentic Sunnah. If the word had not reached us from these sources, it would not have any existence in our thoughts or the thoughts of the enemies of Islam. Thereupon, there would be no discussion about it and it would not be explained according to any theory or meaning, not from us as Muslims or others.

The meaning of these words is that attributing 'revelation' to him, blessings and peace be upon him, such that it is an understood phenomenon or not understood, is something that is agreed upon by all researchers, including the orientalists and enemies of Islam and those bleating behind them. The reason for this agreement is the evidence of history, the history that is represented in the record of the Qur'ān, the authentic Sunnah and the Prophetic Biography. At the forefront of all of them is the story of the beginning of revelation, which is related in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and other collections.

If these words of ours are clear and contain no uncertainty, we should therefore go back—in order to know the explanation of this phenomenon—to these historical sources as well if we see that these sources have explained this phenomenon with elucidation and clarity. It would never be rational, in affirming the word 'revelation' and considering it a vague phenomenon in his life, blessings and peace be upon him, to seek information from the texts of history and its authentic transmissions and then disregard these texts after they have explained this phenomenon and lifted the veil from it.

Every thinking person knows that the researcher has no choice but to follow one of two paths: either he disregards the entire discussion of history and all the mentioned texts, and at that point it is not for him to say anything about something called 'revelation' in the life of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, at all, because the assumption is that it is a word that does not exist

in his life. Or, he can rely on them and he cannot dispute them, and at that point he must lend his ear to all the facts and events that these texts affirm and articulate.

Therefore, it was correct for us to say—without any hyperbole or infringement against the truth—that these people who turn to the Qur'ān and the texts of the Sunnah and the Prophetic Biography and then remove from them the word 'revelation', and remove everything that explains it and elucidates it from these texts themselves, in order to compel the word to bear other meanings and interpretations and not the meanings and interpretations that have been granted it by history and the texts—we say that these people are jesters who do not just oppose science but oppose the intellect in the clearest of its self-evident and indisputable requirements.

When we compare between the explanations of these definitive texts for the phenomenon of revelation in his life, blessings and peace be upon him (and at the forefront of them is the ḥadīth of the beginning of revelation) and how these orientalists and enemies of Islam explain it based on astonishing imaginary matters that no sane person would affirm unless they were fleeing from affirming his Prophethood, blessing and peace be upon him—we realise, in clarity and elucidation, the splendid, Divine Wisdom behind the revelation beginning to come down to him, blessings and peace be upon him, in this way, which has been authentically reported in the ḥadīth of Imam al-Bukhārī and by others:

Why did the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, see Jibrīl with the two eyes in his own head the first time when it was possible for the revelation to be from behind a barrier?

Why did Allah put fear in his heart, blessings and peace be upon him, and bewilderment in understanding its reality when Allah's obvious love for His Messenger and protection of him would require that he put tranquillity in his heart and fortify him and thus he would not

fear and he would not tremble? Why did he fear for himself and think that what had afflicted him was a group of jinn and he wasn't certain from the very beginning that it was a trustworthy angel from Allah?

Why, after that, was the revelation cut off for a long period of time, and the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, became so anxious that he was trying—as Imam al-Bukhārī relates—to fall from the heights of mountains?

These are normal questions regarding the way in which revelation began, and when we contemplate the answers we find that they contain wisdom, and it is that the free thinker finds therein the manifest reality, established upon the indisputable scientific method, and protection against falling into the traps laid by the professionals of the intellectual attack and being influenced by their false and fake imaginations.

While Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, was in the cave of Ḥirā', he was surprised to see, with his own eyes, Jibrīl in front of him, and he was saying to him, 'Read!', and this makes it clear that the phenomenon of revelation is not a self-produced, internal matter that goes back to nothing but one's personal speech. Rather, it is the reception and receiving of an external reality that has no connection to a person's self or what is inside their essence. The angel then embraced him and let him go three times, each time saying, 'Read!', which is considered emphasis for this external reception and intensification in negating what some people imagine, i.e. that it is nothing but an internal fantasy.

He was overcome with fright and fear from what he had heard and seen, so much so that he quit his isolation in the cave and rushed back home with heart thumping, and this is so that it can be made clear to every sane thinker that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was not yearning for the Message that he was called to bear and spread throughout the world, and

that this phenomenon of revelation did not come to be harmonious with or to complete something that he was already imagining or had occurred to him. Rather, what happened was something unexpected that influenced his life, and thus he was surprised by the Message and was not anticipating it.

There is no doubt that this is not what happens to someone who gradually reflects and contemplates until—by way of gradual and continuous unveiling—a creed is formed within himself that he is entrusted to call to.

Furthermore, nothing from the states of inspiration, personal speech, spiritual illumination or exalted contemplations necessitate fear and fright and the yellowing of one's complexion. This is proven by indisputable analogy based on the investigation of states and all similar circumstances, and there is no harmony between gradual thinking and contemplating on the one hand and sudden fright and fear on the other. Otherwise, it would necessitate that all thinkers and contemplators live at the mercy of sudden and successive bouts of fright and fear.

You know very well that fear, fright, trembling and the changing of one's complexion are all involuntary reactions that cannot be fabricated or staged, even if were to assume the possibility of trickery and acting coming from him, blessings and peace be upon him, and we assumed the impossible, which would be his well-known nature before his mission, his nature of honesty and trustworthiness, transforming completely into the opposite.

The illustration of this being a fearful surprise for him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is made even clearer by the fact that he thought that what had seen him, immersed him and spoken to him was a group of jinn, for he said to Khadījah after he had told her what had happened, 'I fear for myself', i.e. from the jinn. However, she reassured him by telling him that he was not something that the harm

of the demons and jinn would have power over, due to his virtuous character and praiseworthy attributes.

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, could have fortified him and put him at ease by informing him that the one who had spoken to him was none other than Jibrīl, one of Allah's angels, who had come to inform him that he was the Messenger of Allah to all mankind, but the splendid Divine Wisdom necessitated that there be a complete interruption between the personality of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, before the mission and his personality after it, and that it be made clear that nothing from the pillars of the Islamic creed or the Islamic legislation was cooking in the mind of the Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace be upon him, beforehand, nor was he even thinking about calling to any of it.

Then there is the fact that Allah inspired Khadijah to take him, blessings and peace be upon him, to Waraqah ibn Nawfal and explain his situation to him (and he was an old man who knowledgeable in Christian and Jewish matters), emphasizing from another angle that that which surprised him, blessings and peace be upon him, was nothing but divine revelation, which had been sent down to Prophets before him, and removing the cover of confusion that had been hovering over him with fear and various imaginations to explain what he had seen and heard.

As for the cutting off of revelation after that, and his remaining without it for six months or more, which is the opposite of what is known⁽¹⁾, this is also a brilliant divine miracle, as it is the most profound refutation of how the professionals in the intellectual attack explain the Prophetic revelation, i.e. that it is psychical illumination originating from him after long contemplation and reflection, and that it is an internal matter coming from within his own depths.

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wanted to veil from him the angel that

(1) (tn): i.e. it would be expected that more revelation would follow immediately.

he had seen for the first in cave of Ḥirā', for a long time, and to have him become overwhelmed with anxiety as a result. Then the anxiety that he had turned into fear for himself, fear that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, had come to loathe Him after wanting to honour him with revelation and Messengership, because of some evil committed on his part, so much so that he felt like the world was suffocating him.

Then his self started saying, every time he arrived at the peak of a mountain, that he should throw himself off...until once again he saw the angel that he had seen in Ḥirā', and his form was filling everything between the sky and the earth, and he was saying, 'O Muḥammad, you are the Messenger of Allah to mankind.' He then went back home again and he was overcome with fear and fright, and that is when the Exalted's statement came down: **"You who are enveloped in your cloak! Arise and warn"** [al-Mudaththir 74:1-2].

Indeed this situation the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, experienced makes the mere thought that revelation is psychical inspiration a type of madness, as it is self-evident that a person who has psychical inspirations and intellectual contemplations will not be led by his inspiration and his contemplation to experience these states.

Therefore, the ḥadīth about the beginning of revelation, as it is mentioned in the affirmed, authentic ḥadīth, contains that which destroys everything that those who spread doubt try to make people think regarding the revelation and the Prophethood that Allah ennobled Muḥammad with, blessings and peace be upon him. It destroys all of that with the two proofs of clear circumstantial evidence and primary indisputable analogy, both of which are based on thorough examination. Thus, if you were to go and explain revelation in spite of the affirmation of this text, with these conjectural, delusional explanations, that would necessitate a number of outcomes all of which would be false and no could intellect could possibly accept.

Yes, you could say, 'I do not consider this text and those like it to be affirmed' (even though that would be stubbornness as it is denying an indisputable report) but we could then say to you, 'Then from where has the word 'revelation' been affirmed for you in his life, blessings and peace be upon him? Why are you wearying yourself looking for something that you can stumble across from its own explanations, and you will be doing this as long as you do not accept the texts that are the very source of this word and its foundation?'

Maybe, after that, someone will ask, 'Why was revelation coming down to him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he was amongst several of his Companions but none of them saw the angel apart from him?'

The answer is that it is not a condition for the existence of something that it be seen with the eyes, for indeed the means of seeing that we possess are limited to a specific scope. Otherwise, it would necessitate that a thing become non-existent as soon as it disappears from sight. Nevertheless, it would be easy for Allah, may His majesty be manifest—and He is the Creator of these seeing eyes—to increase their capacity however much He wants such one can see what other eyes cannot see. Mālik ibn Nabī says in this regard:

'Colour-blindness, for example, gives an exemplary situation in which both eyes cannot see some colours. There is also a group of light rays that are infrared and ultraviolet, which our eyes cannot see, and there is nothing that practically affirms that they are like for all eyes, for there may be some eyes that are less or more sensitive'⁽¹⁾>

Then the continuation of revelation after indicates the same about the reality of revelation and is not, as those who spread doubt would like, a purely psychical phenomenon. We can summarise this indication in the following manner:

(1) *Al-Zāhirah al-Qur'āniyyah* p.127.

1. The clear distinction between the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, as the first was commanded to be recorded immediately while it sufficed for the latter to be stored in the memory of his Companions. This is not because the ḥadīth is speech from him, such that Prophethood has no connection to it, but because the Qur'ān is revealed to him with its own words and letters via Jibrīl, peace be upon him. As for the ḥadīth, its meaning is revelation from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, but its wording and composition are from him, blessings and peace be upon him. Thus, he was wary of Allah's speech, Mighty and Majestic is He, which he had received from Jibrīl, being mixed with his own speech.
2. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would be asked about certain matters not give an answer, sometimes remaining silent for a long period of time, until a verse from the Qur'ān came down regarding the topic of that question. The questioner would ask and he would recite to him whatever of the Qur'ān had come down regarding the matter of his question. Sometimes the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would deal with certain matters in a specific way and the sending down of verses from the Qur'ān would direct him to do things differently, and sometimes they would include some form of reprimand or reproof for him.
3. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was unlettered...and it is not possible for someone to learn historical facts by means of psychical unveiling, like the story of Yūsuf, the mother of Mūsā when she placed her newborn child in the open sea...the story of Pharaoh...and this is among the wisdoms behind him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, being unlettered: **"You never recited any Book before it nor did you write one down with your right hand"** [al-'Ankabūt 29:48].

4. Indeed the Prophet's, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, truthfulness with his people for forty years and his being well-known for it amongst them, necessitates that he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, before any of that, be truthful with himself, and therefore his own study of the phenomenon of revelation inevitably put an end to any doubt hovering about his eyes or his thoughts.

Look at this verse that came as a comment on his contemplation and initial study in trying to unveil the reality of what had befallen him in this regard: **"If you are in any doubt about what We have sent down to you, then ask those who were reciting the Book before you. The truth has come to you from your Lord, so on no account be one of the doubters"** [Yūnus 10:94].

This is why it was related that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, after this verse came down, said, 'I do not doubt and I do not ask.'

We will condense the method that we have followed in understanding the reality of revelation in his life, blessings and peace be upon him, by saying that we find ourselves, first and foremost, faced with an indisputable report that has reached us from via mass-transmission⁽¹⁾ according to its well-known stipulations, and it is the report that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was revealed to.

With this, we have passed the halfway point towards studying this matter. When we wanted to analyse this phenomenon, which we have ascertained to be very much part of the Prophet's life, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, we found that this same report places us in front of specific occurrences and events.

Thus it was inevitable to affirm that after we had affirmed it

(1) Ar. *al-tawātur*, i.e. from so many sources that it is not conceivable that they all conspired to lie.

with regards to establishing the foundation of revelation. When we presupposed (while affirming these events and relying on them) that revelation is anything like what those who deny his Prophethood, blessings and peace be upon him, say it is, we found that this hypothesis clearly necessitates false conclusions that no thinker's intellect can accept.

Poets and those who are inspired do not fall victim to their limbs trembling and their complexion turning yellow when they engage in any form of thinking, and is not reasonable for Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to be enveloped in the most rigorous attributes of trustworthiness and truthfulness and at the same time the most vile manifestations of charlatanism, lying and acting.

If the falsity of these consequences is obvious by the standard of any intellect, the falsity of the hypothesis that necessitated them is also obvious. If these hypotheses have been nullified, then what themselves indicated is firmly established, which is that revelation was a reality that he, blessings and peace be upon him, received and it was external to him being and remote from his well. He was not looking out for it or expecting any of it. After that, we will find, when we discuss the Qur'ān and its phenomenon, that it is nothing other than Jibrīl coming to him with a message for mankind from Allah.

* * *

2. The Prophets that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has sent And how to have faith in them

If you are certain that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was revealed to, and you are certain of the meaning of revelation based on the decisive, scientific proof that we have clarified, then you must be certain of the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him. That means that you believe that the Qur'ān is the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, which was revealed to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

If you believe that the Qur'ān is the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic (and there will be more discussion about the Qur'ān, its miraculous nature and the proof that it is indeed from Allah, Mighty and Majestic), that requires that you know the following matters with regards to having faith in the Messengers and Prophets:

1 - The first Prophet whom Allah the Exalted sent supported with revelation and rulings is Adam, the father of mankind, blessings and peace be upon him, and the last of the Prophets is Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and thus there is no Prophet after him. As for the Prophethood of Adam, blessings and peace be upon him, it is established clearly in what Allah the Exalted has informed us of by way of the story of his creation and then his coming down to earth and his being commanded to follow the guidance that would come to him from Him for him and his progeny (read the story of Adam in the chapter of al-Baqarah, al-'A'rāf, al-Kahf and Ṭaha). As for Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, being the seal of the Prophets, this is established by the clear and plain

texts in Allah's Book, Mighty and Majestic is He, and in the purified Sunnah.

One of the texts of the Book is His statement, may His majesty be manifest: **"Muḥammad is the not the father of any of your men but the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets, and Allah has knowledge of all things"** [al-Aḥzāb 33:40].

One of the texts of the Sunnah is his statement, blessings and peace be upon him, in the agreed-upon ḥadīth: {My likeness and that of the Prophets before me is like that of a man who builds a house and adorns it and beautifies it, except for the place of one brick in a corner. People start walking around it and are impressed by it, and they say, 'Why have you not put that brick in its place?' I am the brick and I am the seal of the Prophets}.

This is one of the self-evident facts that one must have firm conviction in in order to build the meaning of faith and Islam in the heart.

This fact does not contradict what has been established by the evidences regarding 'Īsā, peace be upon him, descending just before the establishment of the Hour (and we will talk about this in the section on unseen matters), for this does not mean that he will come supported by revelation and a new Revealed Law from Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Rather, he will come and he will implement and confirm the Revealed Law of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

In other words, his coming and the fact that He is a Prophet does not abrogate the Prophethood of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Rather, he will come confirming it and corroborating it, and implementing his Revealed Law, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

2 - In His Book, Allah the Exalted has mentioned the names of twenty-five Prophets who were sent, and they are the ones whom one must have firm conviction in their Prophethood in detail, and

that means that it is not permissible for a Muslim (if he asked about one of these who are mentioned as being Prophets in the Qur'ān) to be ignorant of him or ignorant of him being a Prophet, and they are: Adam, Idrīs, Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ, Ismā'īl, Ishāq, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf, Shu'ayb, Ayūb, Dhū al-Kifl, Mūsā, Hārūn, Sulaymān, Dāwūd, Ilyās, Alyas', Yūnus, Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon them.

There are other Prophets that the Qur'ān has not mentioned in detail and has not relating anything of their stories, but has informed us of them in general. Thus, we must have faith in them in general, i.e. we are certain that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has sent many Messengers and Prophets to every nation and group and in various places and eras.

From this you can comprehend the extent of the ignorance of those who imagine that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, only specified the region of the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding areas to receive Messengers and Prophets, for the Prophets who were sent to this part of the world are only a small portion of all the Prophets that have been sent to the various groups of people in the east of the world and in its west.

In affirmation of this, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says, **"...and Messengers We have not told you about, and Allah spoke directly to Mūsā"** [al-Nisā' 4:164].

And Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says, **"There is no community to which a warner has not come"** [Fāṭir 35:24].

He also says, **"Your Lord would never destroy any cities without first sending to the chief of them a Messenger to recite Our Signs to them. We would never destroy any cities unless their inhabitants were wrongdoers"** [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:59].

Based on this, the number of Prophets throughout the ages must be in the thousands, and some scholars have set it at 124,000. However,

we do not see, as the majority of scholars have said, any evidence from the Book or the Sunnah or an authentic, observed tradition that would make us stick to this specific number or something else. Rather, adhering to what the Qur'ān has brought and following its example requires that we adhere to the side of general faith, realising the requirement of His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"...and Messengers We have not told you about."**

As al-Nasafī has said, by mentioning a number one is not safe from including amongst them those who are not of them or excluding from them those who are of them.

3 - One of the most important aspects of difference between the Prophethood of our Prophet Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the previous Prophets is that our master Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, was sent to all of mankind, as he stated in the authentic ḥadīth has been related by Muslim, {I have been given five things that no one before me was given: every Prophet was sent specifically to His people while I have been sent to all of mankind. The spoils of war have been made permissible for me and they were not made permissible for anyone before me. The earth has been made pure and clean for me and a place of prayer, so whenever a man finds that a prayer time has entered, he can pray wherever he is. Allah has made me victorious through awe from a distance of one's month travel, and I have been given the right of intercession}⁽¹⁾.

4 - You should know that Prophethood is something that Allah ennoble His Prophets with. It is a single reality that is not dissimilar and does not differ between one Prophet and another. Thus, it is not permissible to differentiate between one Prophet and another from this angle, and this is what is meant by His statement, may His majesty

(1) Related by Muslim in the chapter on mosques and related by al-Bukhārī in the chapter on dry ablution and mosques.

be manifest: **“The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his lord, and so do the believers. Each one believes in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers. We do not differentiate between any of His Messengers”** [al-Baqarah 2:285]. It is also what is meant by his statement, blessings and peace be upon him: {Do not prefer me over Mūsā and do not single me out over the Prophets}.

As for rank—irrespective of the meaning of Prophethood, which is the common denominator between all of them—there is no doubt that the best of creation, in absolute terms, is our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and this is what all Muslims have agreed upon without exception, and this is due to the generality of his mission, which is to all mankind. In clarifying this, he, blessings and peace be upon him, says, {I am the most noble in the sight of Allah, of the first and of the last, without boasting.} And Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says in clarifying this, **“You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind.”** [Āl ‘Imrān 3:110], as there is no doubt that this nation being the best follows from our Prophet being the best, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

5 - There must be faith in the Book that the Messengers were sent with to their peoples and groups. We believe in them in general with regards to the books that have been named or discussed in general. We believe in them in detail with regards to those that are mentioned in detail, such as the Torah, the Injīl, the Zabūr and the scriptures that were sent down to some of the Messengers, like Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him.

The meaning of having faith in them is firm conviction that they are revelation from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, for the peoples to whom the Messengers of Allah were sent. This does not necessitate firm conviction that the books that bear the same names today are still truth from Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Rather, the indisputable

fact is that both alteration and distortion have spread throughout these books, with the long passage of time and by the actions of those who exploited Allah's religion, Mighty and Majestic is He, for several different purposes. The best clear historical example of this is what Paul did to the Injīl, in terms of playing with it, changing its facts, annihilating whatever did not please him and inserting what he thought should be inserted based on his dull opinion and false contriving.

Likewise, the requirement to have faith in these books does not necessitate the requirement to have faith that everything they contain in terms of legislative rulings must be adopted and applied after the sending of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him. That is because the legislative portion of what is in these Books has been abrogated by the Islamic Revealed Law, as you know. Thus, no part of it is to be applied or relied upon, even if it has not been altered or distorted.

The summary of what the requirement to have faith in the Heavenly Books means is that they are Books that were originally revealed from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and that they contain the everlasting creed of pure monotheism throughout the ages. Likewise, they contain legislative rulings—some more and some less—but most of them are abrogated by whatever came after them, and the details are to be found in clarification of the sixth and final point:

6 - The Revealed Law of the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, abrogates all the previous Revealed Laws. What is meant by Revealed Laws—as you know—are those practical rulings that are attached to acts of worship or the various transactions. One's faith in the Prophethood of our master Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is not considered sufficient faith until it is added to the faith that whatever legislation he was sent with abrogates all the Revealed Laws of the Prophets who came before him.

This fact is clear and incontestable when it comes to issues and matters for which the Book or the Sunnah has presented a new ruling, for it abrogates whatever was before it. As for previous issues and rulings which the neither the Book nor the Sunnah has discussed at all, there has been a difference of opinion amongst the scholars of legislation. Some of them have said that laws of those who came before are considered laws for us as long as nothing has been mentioned that abrogates them. Others have said that they are not laws for us under any circumstance, for the mere sending of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is considered as abrogating all previous Revealed Laws.

The proper place for examining this issue is the science of jurisprudence,⁽¹⁾ and thus we will not discuss it at length here. Based on this, it is valid for you to say 'Revealed Laws' due to their plurality and their disparity, and it is not valid for you to say 'Revealed Religions' due to the lack of plurality and disparity, unless you are using religion to mean Revealed Law in a figurative sense.

As for the Revealed Law of our master Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, no law abrogates it, as there is no consideration for a law unless it is revelation from Allah, Mighty and Majestic. It has been established that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is the Seal of the Prophets, and thus it is inconceivable that any law will come and abrogate it.

Furthermore, the Revealed Law of our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, contains—as you know—that which abrogates itself due to splendid wisdoms that cannot be explained here, and the proper place for details about this matter is the science of jurisprudence.

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(1) Ar. *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

3. The Necessary Attributes of Prophets

By their attributes we mean that which comprises the conditions of Prophethood that must be present in them as is expressed by the majority of the scholars of *kalām*, as the necessary attributes and the conditions are one thing and there is no difference between them.

The totality of what is obligatory for the Prophets is four attributes:

The first attribute: maleness

Thus, Prophethood and Messengership are not for females. Know that our evidence for this is both the facts that are indicated by Allah the Exalted concerning the Messengers and Prophets that He has sent to people throughout the age as well as the attribute of perfection that must be present in Messengers and Prophets, which contradict femaleness, as is known, and there has been no difference of opinion amongst the vast majority of Muslims regarding the stipulation of this attribute.

You should also know that this reality does not contradict the ascription of revelation in the Qur'ān to the mother of Mūsā, as in the Exalted's statement: **"We revealed to Mūsā's mother, 'Suckle him...'"** [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:7] and the rest of the verse. It also does not contradict the ascription of the Divine Command to the mother of 'Īsā, blessings and peace be upon him, as in His statement, may His majesty be manifest: **"A voice called out to her from under her, 'Do not grieve...'"** [Maryam 19:24].

This is because the revelation that was ascribed to Mūsā's mother means inspiration, and this is something that all people share. Allah also ascribed revelation to the bee, for He said, **"Your Lord revealed to the bee: 'Build dwellings in the mountains and the trees, and also in the structures which men erect'"** [al-Naḥl 16:68].

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The command that was directed at 'Īsā's mother could be a call from an angel, such as Jibrīl, and by itself it does not mean Prophethood nor does it necessitate it.

The second attribute: trustworthiness:

What we mean by this is honesty and Allah protecting them outwardly and inwardly from being involved in anything that is forbidden, for if they were not like that their missions to mankind would be a waste, and this is impossible for Allah, Mighty and Majestic, as you know.

This means that the Prophets, blessings and peace be upon them, are safeguarded from lying, and especially in matters connected to Revealed Laws, the conveyance of rulings and guiding their peoples. As for doing so deliberately, this is by consensus. As for doing it unintentionally, this is the position of the majority of the Muslims.

The third attribute: being safeguarded from falling into sins

Regarding this attribute there is detail that must be treated in full, and it is that sins differ in terms of severity. As for the most severe of them, which is disbelief, they are safeguarded from it before Prophethood and after it by consensus. As for deliberately committing major sins, this is also impossible for them before Prophethood and after it by consensus.

As for the minor sins that do not violate respectability (*murū'ah*) and do not necessitate baseness, this is a topic of debate and discussion amongst the scholars. The discussion therein goes into matters of personal reasoning (*ijtihād*) for which no decisive evidence has emerged that would cut down the difference of opinion from its root, even though the majority of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have inclined towards the position that the minor sins are also not committed by the Prophets, and especially after their missions. On

account of the fact that in this book we have adhered to the path of not going into detail unless we are discussing sureties that are based on decisive proof, i.e. that which if one denies one becomes a disbeliever—we see no need to delve into any of these branch differences, in which the *mujtahid* is allowed to incline towards more than one ruling in view of the inconclusive evidences. It suffices you to know and be firmly convinced that the Prophets are decisively safeguarded from disbelief and major sins before and after their missions, and they are safeguarded from the aforementioned minor sins according to the vast majority.

You should also know that a mistake in personal reasoning does not in any way enter into the sins that the Prophet have been affirmed as being safeguarded from, as personal reasoning is an act of worship for which the *mujtahid* is reward whether he is correct or mistaken. However, it has been established that the Prophets do not remain firm upon a mistake in personal reasoning. Rather, revelation inevitably comes to them to clarify what is the most complete, most correct and most perfect in the knowledge of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Something that is not hidden is that this correct that revelation brings is one of the strongest evidences for the Prophethood of the Prophethood, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and that Prophethood is not internal thoughts or psychic feelings, as those who spread doubt and the hypocrites like to imagine.

In any case, a mistake of the Prophet in personal reasoning is only called a mistake in view of his relationship, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with is Lord. As for in view of his relationship with people, they cannot do anything other than follow him in both situations. In other words, everything that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, bring to them is correct with regards to them, and they must accept it and follow it.

The fourth attribute: perfect intellect, precision and justice:

This is because it is one of the necessities of carrying out the Message that he has been commanded to convey. Were it possible for the Messenger to be deficient in his intellect or his precision⁽¹⁾ or his justice while he is commanded to convey the Message that he is responsible for, that would contradict the foundation of Messengership and it is part of frivolity, which is impossible for Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

Know that these four attributes, which must be present in every Messenger and Prophet, are evidenced by both transmitted and rational proofs. As for the transmitted proofs, it is what we have heard in the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunnah by way of the attributes of the Messengers and Prophets that have been sent throughout the eras and ages. As for the rational proof, it is what we have affirmed in terms of what the Message that they are responsible for necessitates, which is these attributes and what they entail.

When it has been made clear to you that these are the conditions and attributes that must be realised in the Messengers and Prophets, you become certain that behind that they are nothing more than human beings, like the rest of mankind. They eat, they drink, they get married, they walk about in the market, and all human desires wrestle within their souls: they become hungry and thus they desire food, they become thirsty and thus they look for something to drink, they become tired and thus they incline towards rest, they are harmed and thus they feel the pain of that harm, just like everyone else. Their hearts are exposed to everything that a person's heart is exposed to, such as the feeling of love, aversion, hatred and mercy, as long as none of that necessitates sin or necessitates something that would contradict the four attributes that we have mentioned. Their bodies are exposed to everything as long as it is not an illness, disease or ailment that would repel people. Then their bodies come to an end in

(1) (tn): i.e. he was forgetful.

the same way all human bodies come to an end, with death and the extinguishing of the burning log of life.

The intelligent researcher should not find any defect in this that calls for examination, because Allah the Exalted's wisdom required that He take from amongst human beings themselves an elite class of people through whom He would convey His message to mankind. It is not from the requirements of the Prophethood that one human being is described with that anything from his natural disposition or human characteristics change. Rather, Allah the Exalted's wisdom required that he remain as he is: a human being, in all of his behaviours, his character and his feelings, with the exception of what we should bear in mind by way of those attributes that we have mentioned being present in them.

In clarifying this fact, Allah, may His majesty be manifest, says, **"We never sent any Messengers before you who did not eat food and walk in the marketplace. But we have made some of you a trial for others to see if you will be steadfast. Your Lord sees everything"** [al-Furqān 25:20].

He also clarifies it by saying it in another way, **"Nothing prevents people from believing when guidance comes to them but the fact that they say, 'Has Allah sent a human being as Messenger?' Say: 'If there had been angels on the earth going about in peace, We would have sent down to them an angel from heaven as Messenger'"** [al-Isrā' 17:94-95].

The issue of the wives of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in general and his marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh in particular

Firstly—the issue of his wives in general, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

We have explained this well-known fact to you with the elucidation of the verses of the Clear Book, so that afterwards the astonishing

thing that some researchers have fallen into can be clear to you, such as imagining that the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, marrying the women that he did is a problem that needs discussion, and that he contradicted (according to what they imagine) the rank of Prophethood and the infallibility that Allah had ennobled His Prophet with.

What does it mean that this contradicts the rank of Prophethood and infallibility? Is the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, taking as wives the women that he did considered an unlawful sin? Or, does it violate the condition of trustworthiness or honesty or integrity in the lives of the Prophets? If we presume that it is an unlawful sin, then what is the evidence that it is a sin? Is there a source of legislation that contains all the rulings of what is lawful, unlawful, obligatory and mandatory other than the Qur'ān that has reached us via Muḥammad himself, may Allah bless him and grant him peace? If that is the case, then how would it be possible for us to describe it as unlawful when Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has affirmed his marriage to all whom he married in His Qur'ān in Sūrat al-Aḥzāb, and He informed him that it was for him to keep close to whomever of them he wanted, to refrain from whomever of them he wanted and to divorce whomever of them he wanted. This also made it clear that Allah granted a special ruling to His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that He did not grant to people in general besides him. He said in this regard, in very clear speech:

“O Prophet! We have made lawful for you: your wives to whom you have given dowries and any slavegirls you own from the booty Allah has allotted you, and the daughters of your paternal uncles, and the daughters of your paternal aunts, and the daughters of your maternal uncles, and the daughters of your maternal aunts who have emigrated with you, and any believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet if the Prophet desires

to marry her: exclusively for you as opposed to the rest of the believers—We know very well what We have prescribed for them regarding their wives and any slavegirls they possess—in order that there be no restriction on you. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. You may refrain from any of them you will and keep close to you any of them you will. And if you desire any you have left alone, there is nothing wrong in that. This makes it more likely they will be comforted and not be grieved, and all of them will be content with what you give them. Allah knows what is in your hearts. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing. After that, no other women are lawful for you nor may you exchange them for other wives, even though their beauty might be pleasing to you, except for any you own as slaves. Allah is watchful over all things” [al-Aḥzāb 33:50-52].

This is speech that Muḥammad was addressed with, blessings and peace be upon him...?

If you have been reading my book one bit at a time, just these paragraphs, and you have still have not resolved the matter of having faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic and faith in the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech sent down to him—then you should not look into this branch issue when you still have not finished understanding its foundations. You must know that the problem that is in your head is not actually the issue of the Prophet's wives, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Rather, it is the problem of lack of faith in Allah's existence and in the Prophethood of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and that this Qur'ān is Allah's speech. It would be better for you not to deceive yourself and hide your greater problem away from examination and study and go and ask about this branch issue which even if you were to spend the rest of your life asking about it, no answer would ever satisfy you. Rather, go

back to looking into the Creator's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, and then the evidences for the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and what we will talk about shortly in terms of his various miracles and what is attached to them. When you have finished with faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, has been established for you and you believe with sincere faith that the Qur'ān cannot be the speech of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and is only the speech of the One Who created Muḥammad and then chose him from amongst His creation and singled him out for Messengership and His speech, then you will not find any problem that needs discussion in the story of his wives, blessings and peace be upon him.

Indeed Allah, Mighty and Majestic, distinguished Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with a group of rulings that were exclusive to him. It was an obligation upon him to stand at night and perform the *tahajjud* prayer while it was not an obligation for anyone else. It was unlawful for him to receive *zakāt* and charity (*ṣadaqāt*) and it was not unlawful for anyone belonging to one of the deserving categories to accept it.⁽¹⁾ Whatever wealth he owned was detained and not given to his inheritors after him, and no one's wealth has ever been detained from one's inheritors apart from the Prophets. It was permitted for him to marry the number of women that he did collectively, and no one apart from him was allowed other than two, three or four.⁽²⁾ It was unlawful for people to marry his wives after him and this was not the case for any other women. So, what is wrong with Allah exclusively applying some of His rulings to one of His slaves?

(1) (tn): See Sūrat al-Tawbah 9:60.

(2) (tn): See Sūrat al-Nisā' 4:3.

Yes, there would be something wrong with it if you were you were to look into the marital life of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and find something that would indicate that he slipped and fulfilled some sexual desire or some deviation or he committed something unlawful or something indecent because of that. Have you found anything like this in his life, may Allah bless him and grant him peace?

Have you arrived at anything authentic from his biography, his Sunnah or reports about him that indicates that he was lecherous and would sacrifice his values and obligations in order to fulfil his desires?

Indeed every day of his life, whether it was before his mission or after it, is a clear and unequivocal elucidation articulating that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is completely above that and that despite that he is a human being in possession of all the original human characteristics that man is naturally endowed with. Yet, despite that fact, he possesses all the virtues and lofty merits that can possibly be gathered in a human being.

A lecherous man would not remain chaste and pure for the first twenty-five years of his life in a society that attaches no blame or censure to any deviation in the regard, a society swelling with vice and answering to anyone who wants to fulfil their desires for just a paltry price. And if this lecherous man were to get married after that, he would not marry an older woman who was almost twice his age and had been married twice before while at the same time, had he wanted, he could have had whomever he wanted from amongst the virgins around him with whatever wealth he wanted without undergoing therein anything excessive or unbearable. Then this lecherous man would not, after that, remain restricted to this one wife of his until he was in his fifties.

(And you know that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did not marry anyone besides Khadijah until some time

after her death, and he was over fifty years of age.) A lecherous man would not deprive his women whom he was married to of the simplest adornments and deny them the least of what all other women enjoy in terms of outward comforts.

Thus, is Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and he is the bearer of these attributes consensus of both those who believe in him and those who disbelieve in him, despite all of this, a man following his desires and deviating towards that which is impermissible for the sake of pleasure?

Indeed the one who says this, my thinking companion, is nothing a but a man whose soul was already filled with hatred towards the Prophet, towards his Prophethood and towards the fruits of his call, such as the bliss of humanity in the east of the world and in the west. Thus, in this invective of his, he is looking for some breathing space for the hatred he already had, which, in reality, has no connected to marriage and its affair. You know very well that these discussions of ours contain nothing other than that which draws intellects towards following the truth, and they contain nothing of benefit in terms of curing souls of hatred.

* * *

Secondly—the issue of his marriage to Zaynab in particular:

Just as there is no problem in the matter of the Messenger's wives, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for the one who is a believer in Allah and His Messenger and that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech, likewise there is no problem in the story of his marriage to Zaynab, may Allah be pleased with her, after her divorce from Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, the servant of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for whoever is a believer with this faith.

Zayd ibn Ḥārithah was—as you know—adopted by the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the people

would call him, 'Ibn Muḥammad'⁽¹⁾, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. Adoption was a prevalent custom in pre-Islamic society, and for them had it all the same consequences and effects as natural filiation. It would be extremely scandalous, because of this, for a man to marry the divorced wife of his adopted son. They would view it the same way they would view someone marrying his own daughter. The Messenger, who deeply and greatly loved this adopted son of his, married him to one of his relatives: Zaynab, based on his suggestion and choice, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He thus married her, consummated the marriage and they remained married for a period of time.

Allah, may His majesty be manifest, wanted to abolish this practice of adoption from the Islamic community along with all the deep-rooted customs and traditions that came with it in Arab society, stretching back over long periods of time. It is from the sublimity of Allah's wisdom and His planning that He established His legislative rulings gradually by way of events that took place and actual problems that emerged, so that every ruling was connected to roots that penetrated the soil of the society and its being, and thus no ruling would be influenced by the sentiments of customs and bygone traditions. So what would be the way—and this is Allah's standard practice in establishing His legislation—to abrogate the custom of adoption and everything connected to it such that it would never come back?

The way that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, willed was for the felicity of life between Zayd and his wife to deteriorate, and thus he divorced her, and Allah, may His majesty be manifest, made the heart of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, ready to marry her. Then Allah revealed to him the command to marry her in a clear and unequivocal verse in the Qur'ān.⁽²⁾ Thus he, may Allah

(1) (tn): i.e. the son of Muḥammad.

(2) (tn): See Sūrat al-Aḥzāb 33:37.

bless him and grant him peace, married her and the story spread amongst the Arabs, and the verse which conveyed Allah's ruling, Mighty and Majestic is He, nullifying this pre-Islamic practice and abolishing it from consideration, spread with it. Thus, what blame can you attach to this way that Allah's wisdom necessitated? Indeed, I say: what way do you have that is better than this to nullify a deep-rooted, pre-Islamic custom in pre-Islamic society such that there would be no nostalgia for it and it would not leave any fertile ground for it to be planted in and thus return? I do not believe any sane person can debate this truth, not even with a single word.

This is what happened: the felicity of their life together deteriorated. Zayd would complain about her harsh words, her disobedience, her sharp tongue and her pride in her nobility. He repeated approached the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and asked for permission to divorce her. He, blessing and peace be upon him, would say to him each time, 'Keep your wife to yourself and fear Allah.' Maybe he saw her during this period of time, one day, and thus his heart inclined towards her, so he turned away, saying to himself, 'Glory be to Allah, the One Who turns over the hearts', and the narrations have mentioned something like this. I do not know what it is that prompts people to refrain from accepting these narrations, or to find them dubious or not to look at them.⁽¹⁾

(1) We say these words to whoever holds the opinion of adhering to this narration that we have alluded to and considers it an authentic narration, following what has been related by al-Ṭabarī and al-Nisābūrī and mentioned by al-Bayḍawī and Ibn al-Jawzī in order to make it clear to such people—assuming that it is authentic—that it cannot be relied upon to attach any fault to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

A great number from the scholars of ḥadīth and the imams of Qur'ānic commentary (*tafsīr*) have declared it weak, including al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr. They said, 'The relied-upon, authentic narration in that regard is what has been narrated on the authority of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, received revelation from Allah that Zayd

What is suspicious or problematic about Allah wanting to marry His Messenger to the divorced wife of his adopted son for a specific

was divorcing his wife and that he would marry her by Allah marrying him to her. When Zayd complained to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, about Zaynab's character and that she did not obey him and let him know that he wanted to divorce her, he said to him by way of etiquette and advice, {Fear Allah in what you say and keep your wife.} He knew that we would separate from her and that he would marry her, and this is what he concealed within himself and the Producer, may His majesty be manifest, censured him for it by saying, "...while concealing something in yourself that Allah wished to bring to light" [al-Aḥzāb 33:37].

As for ourselves, and we have preferred not to ignore the other narration that has been conveyed by al-Ṭabarī and others, as some people think, we have indeed desired to unveil the infallibility of our master, the Messenger of Allah, above what a group of orientalists and leaders of the intellectual attack have accused him of, such that even if we presume them to be authentic, they do not increase him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace—in any case—except in loftiness of character and exalted rank. There is no good reason to elucidate the infallibility of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by ignoring this narration and decisively declaring it false. By doing so, you let the questioner think that al-Ṭabarī and those who agreed with him, by not declaring this narration weak, were not worried about attaching fault to his character, blessings and peace be upon him. May they be far removed from such a thing. Rather, it should increase the doubts of those who have whisperings and those who have weak faith. They are the people who are not lacking a means with which to look for this narration and its sources that do not declare it weak and do not talk about it being false. One of them continues to attach fault to the Messenger of Allah, blessings and peace be upon him, claiming that he is following the school of al-Ṭabarī and those like him! Or he claims—out of wickedness—that he is attaching fault to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace with the possibility of it being weak!

One of the most dangerous banes of this ignoring is that it uproots confidence in the motive from the souls of these people. Indeed it makes them imagine that the affair of this religion is in the hand of its "shaykhs", and thus if something of the religion pleases them they strengthen the ḥadīths that mention it, and if they do not like something, they close the path of discussion by declaring them weak or rejected or they claim they are fabricated.

legislative wisdom, and thus prepare him in the well-known human way? Indeed, let me say this to you: what is it that moved the heart of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to incline towards her? When was the inclination of hearts ever attached to ruling in the Revealed Law, and the entire world knows that the heart's inclinations are classed under involuntary reactions and not voluntary, earned actions? Nevertheless, I mention again that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, did see her before he married her to Zayd, and if the issue were an issue of strongly desiring her, nothing would have prevented him from marrying her himself without placing between himself and this marriage an obstacle that was used like a medicine to cure pre-Islamic customs.

When Zayd divorced her, after his patience ran out and he could no longer tolerate how he was treating her, revelation came down to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in the form of this verse:

“When you said to him whom Allah has blessed and you yourself has greatly favoured, ‘Keep your wife to yourself and fear Allah’ while concealing something in yourself which Allah wished to bring to light, you were fearing people when Allah has more right to your fear. Then when Zayd divorced her We married her to you so that there should be no restriction for the believers regarding the wives of their adopted sons when they have divorced them. Allah’s command is always carried out” [al-Aḥzāb 33:37].

Now, you must answer these two questions for me:

What necessity is this that would prompt Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, (and his reputation was very important to him) to plunge into and intrude upon one of the most important Arab customs and marry the divorced wife of his adopted son without a care for what they would say or their rebuke, were it

not for the divine ruling that led him to do it? Indeed the Messenger—as the verse indicates and as human convention indicates—boldly implemented this divine command while being apprehensive about what people would say about him upon being surprised by it, and he still boldly proceeded with this matter that was extremely disgraceful in their culture.

What necessity is this that prompted him to insert this verse into the Qur’ān and then recite it to all people and from its first letter to its last letter it contains strong censure of the Messenger, and it discloses what he was concealing within himself in terms of knowing that he would marry Zaynab after Zayd had divorced her, or his heart inclining towards her? Then it is an elucidation of his fear of what his people would say if he boldly proceeded to marry the divorced wife of his adopted son and a clarification of Allah’s ruling that he must implement. We say: what necessity would prompt our master Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, to insert this verse into the Qur’ān and record it for the entire passage of time, were it not for this Qur’ān, the speech of his Creator, of which he could not conceal even one letter? It because of this that ‘Ā’ishah said, in what has been related by Muslim and others, ‘Had the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, concealed anything of the revelation he would have concealed this verse.’

By my life, I have not found anything in the Prophetic Biography that gives clearer evidence of his Prophethood, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, than this incident, and I have not found a verse in the Qur’ān that gives clearer evidence that the Qur’ān is the speech of Allah, and Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has nothing to do with it, not even a letter, than this verse that came down because of this incident. Any sane person can see what I see but we do not have the means, as I have told you, with regards to any of these facts, to treat the hatred

of the haters, the bigotry of the bigots and the anger of the angry. We testify that we have no capacity in that regard whatsoever other than that we ask Allah the Exalted, for ourselves and all people, to grant us the enabling success to be free of every authority besides the authority of the intellect alone, and knowledge that the train of life that is speedily taking us towards death will not be benefitted in the slightest in the face of death comes or what comes after death by us having hatred and bigotry and by us subjecting our thinking to their⁽¹⁾ whips and letting them do whatever they want. Rather, what will be of benefit is for us to know the truth that is the truth, and then cling to it for no reason other than that it is the truth.

* * *

¹ (tn): i.e. hated and bigotry

4. Miracles

Defining them, the need to be firmly convinced of them and the position of science concerning them

Their definition is every matter that violates the norm and appears at the hands of someone who claims Prophethood when challenged by those who deny him, in a way that elucidates the veracity of his claim.

Our statement 'violates the norm' makes it clear that a miracle only contradicts that which is normal and familiar and does not contradict the intellect and possibility. Our statement 'appears at the hands of someone who claims Prophethood' excludes those suspensions of the norm that occur for some of those who draw near to Allah and the righteous, which are called *karāmāt*⁽¹⁾. Our statement 'when challenged by those who deny' is a caution against what can happen coincidentally and not in the face of a challenge or to manifest the veracity of Prophethood, in which case it is thus a type of divine ennoblement. However, it is not stipulated that there be an unequivocal challenge. Rather, the context of the situation suffices. Our statement 'in a way that manifests the veracity of his claim' excludes suspensions of the norm that come in order to refute a claim to Prophethood, such as an inanimate object speaking and refuting someone⁽²⁾.

If you know that miracles are only suspensions of the norm, you realise that the intellect does not deem it impossible for them to take place. That is because the continuation of natural phenomena according to their familiar ordering that we see is not something necessary that the intellect presumes to be indispensable. It is something that has

¹ (tn): the singular of which is *karāmah*, which we could translate as 'wonder'.

² See al-Jalāl al-Duwānī's commentary on *al-'Aqā'id al-'Aḍadiyyah* (2/277).

been weaved by custom and formed due to apparent causes. Whatever astonishment or disparagement is attached to these suspensions of the norm is only because of their remoteness from observation and what is familiar.

The ruling of having firm conviction in them:

It is obligatory upon every Muslim to have firm conviction that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has equipped His Prophets and Messengers, whom He has sent to mankind, with miracles that elucidate the veracity of their call and clarify for people their connection to Allah, may His majesty be manifest, and that they are supported by him. There is no Prophet except that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, ennobled him with a miracle that alerted people to the need to have faith in him and adhere to his guidance, and regarding this the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says:

{There is no Prophet except that he was given signs the like of which made people believe in him. What I have been given is only revelation that has been revealed to me, and I hope that out of all of them I have the most followers on the Day of Standing.} The verses in the Qur'ān that give evidence of Allah supporting his Prophets with various miracles are many and well-known and there is no need to enumerate them.

The miracles of our master Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

What concerns us in terms of going into detail here is to discuss the miracles of our Prophet Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and explain the obligation to have firm conviction in them, and their importance in unveiling the meaning of Prophethood and its reality in his life, blessings and peace be upon him.

The first of his miracles with which Allah, Mighty and Majestic, assisted him is the miracle of the Qur'ān:

This is the most profound and most sublime of all the miracles with which Allah has assisted His Messengers and Prophets. That is because it is miracle that remains throughout the passage of time, articulating his Prophethood, blessings and peace be upon him, in every time and place, while all other miracles with which Allah supported His Prophets have ended and gone and become history and reports that are remembered.

The wisdom behind establishing this miracle for the Message of our master Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and none of the previous Prophets and Messengers, is that the Message of each the previous Prophets, before him, blessings and peace be upon him, was temporary and only lasted until the sending of whoever came afterwards. As for the Message of our Prophet Muḥammad, it is to remain until the Day of Standing, and thus it needed a miracle that would testify to it throughout all these eras.

As for aspects of the Qur'ān's miraculous nature, there are many. However, in their totality they are divided into two categories: those that are general and for all mankind and those that are exclusively for the Arabs.

And for those that are general and for all mankind, they are embodied in him informing of unseen matters that had not yet occurred and then they happened just as he said they would, as well as his informing of previous nations and their stories. Likewise, they are embodied in his comprehensive, precise legislation that is suitable for every time and place while it was well-known that he, blessings and peace be upon him, was unlettered and did not read or write anything, let alone study any law or legislation. He was not interested at all in the known social structures that the Persians

and Greeks had and their scientific maxims and researches that researchers today are still discovering and studying.

These aspects of the Qur'ān's miraculous nature can be understood by both Arabs and non-Arabs, as long as they have a sound intellectual disposition.

As for those that are exclusively for the Arabs, this is what the Qur'ān contains by way of its unique composition, which we do not find to be in harmony with prose and what is well-known of its styles and methods nor do we find that it conforms to poetry and what is well-known of its meters and prosody, along with lofty, amazing eloquence and a peculiar style from which all categories of people can take benefit; the masses, the educated and the specialists, such that all the masters of rhetoric and eloquence from the era of Prophethood till today have been unable to produce anything like it, despite the challenges and instigations that it contains, repeatedly and in different style, inviting them to try.

An elucidation of this is that the Arabs asked Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to bring a sign to them that would indicate the veracity of his call and his Message, so Allah the Exalted informed them that this Qur'ān is the most sublime sign that indicates what they want. He said, **"They say, 'Why have no Signs been sent down to him from his Lord?' Say: 'The Signs are with Allah. I am only a clear warner.' It is not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is recited to them? There is certainly a mercy and reminder in that for people who believe"** [al-'Ankabūt 29:50-51].

However, the disbelievers persisted in their stubbornness and denial, and they disputed that there was anything in the verses of the Qur'ān that would indicate the veracity of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in his call. They turned away from him, saying, **"We have already heard all this. If we wanted,**

we could say the same thing. This is nothing but the myths of previous peoples" [al-Anfāl 8:31].

At that point, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, challenged them—or you can say that the Qur'ān challenged them, if you want—to bring one chapter like it. This challenge was given in different forms, in terms of wording and style, and He incited them to it with scolding and enthusiasm and different types of challenges. One time He said to them, **"If you have doubts about what We have sent down to Our slave, produce another chapter equal to it, and call your witnesses, besides Allah, if you are telling the truth. If you do not do that—and you will not do it—then fear the Fire whose fuel is people and stones, made ready for the disbelievers"** [al-Baqarah 2:23-24].

And another time He said to them, **"Say: 'If both men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could never produce anything like it, even if they backed each other up'"** [al-Isrā' 17:88].

And He said to them as a scolding challenge, **"Or do they say, 'He has simply made it up'? No, the truth is that they do not believe. Let them produce a discourse like it if they are telling the truth"** [al-Ṭūr 52:33-34].

It was from the requirement of their well-known rhetoric, their statement 'if we wanted, we could say the same thing', the hatred and aversion that was wrestling in their hearts towards what the Prophet had brought, blessings and peace be upon him, their persisting in an untiring search to find a means to ruin his affair and prevent his call from being successful, all of these things required that they rise up to oppose it and keep up with it with parts of their eloquent speech, and in the way they did things in their literary gatherings in terms of competitions and exchanging arts of speech. This would be to

stop people thinking about it and to announce to whoever had been deceived by this that he had brought to them that they had come with something like it or better than it.

However, despite all of this, they did not do anything and they did not answer the challenge of the Qur'ān by making any sort of attempt. However, they did turn back on their previous statement 'if we wanted, we could say the same thing' and instead claimed that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had only come to them with magic...or soothsaying...or unique poetry, just as Allah said about them, **"But when the truth came to them they said, 'This is magic and we reject it'"** [al-Zukhruf 43:30].

Then the verses of challenge remained recorded in Allah the Exalted's Book, striking the ears of men of letters, poets and rhetoricians, of varying creeds and denominations, in every age and century, and none of them have been able to record any work next to this challenge such it could be said that they produced something comparable to the Qur'ān and thus brought something good. This fact is one of the clearest empirical and observational evidences that the Qur'ān is miraculous, as what has happened over the course of history and several centuries is evidence itself.

Then we apply the proof of thorough examination to this reality and we say: the incapacity of all the Arabs to bring something equal to the Qur'ān is clear evidence that it could not possibly have been compiled by one of them, such as Waraqah ibn Nawfal, Baḥīrā the monk or other people, as this possibility contradicts the proof of its miraculous nature that has been evidenced by experience and observation. Nevertheless, the Qur'ān contains comments on events that occurred after the deaths of Waraqah and Baḥīrā, so how, despite that, can it be from the suggestion or composition of either of them?

Then we say: let us suppose that what was revealed to him was from the jinn. However, this supposition also necessitates false

conclusions that unveil its falsity. Whoever of the jinn revealed these words to Muḥammad, he would not reveal them to him unless they were something that the jinn were able to produce the like of, and it is absolutely not possible that this created jinn would not be countered by another jinn like him revealing a Qur'ān like his throughout all these centuries to one of these people who desire to compile something like it but are not able to. Furthermore, we know that just as Allah challenged man with the Qur'ān, He also challenged the jinn. Listen to these verses, for example: **"The demons did not bring it down. It does not befit them and they are not capable of it. They are debarred from hearing it"** [al-Shu'arā' 26:210-212].

Just as there are amongst men those who hate the truth even though they know it is the truth and wish that they were able to ruin the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān by any means possible, there are also amongst the jinn those who hate with the same hate and wish the same wish. Thus, when we do not see any man being revealed to by a jinn with something equal to the Qur'ān, we know by the evidence of experience as well that it is not from the composition of the jinn or from their suggestion.

And this is how the evidence of thorough investigation is completed, showing that this Qur'ān that came down to Muḥammad the unlettered, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was not from the composition of any human being in his time, nor was it from the composition of a jinn transfusing it into him or reciting it to him. Thus, the intellect is restricted to the necessity of having in what this Qur'ān says and affirms itself, which is that it is the speech of Allah, may His majesty be manifest, which was brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit⁽¹⁾ to Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, so that he can be the seal of those who have warned and sent to the entire world. And thus it is established that

(1) (tn): i.e. Jibrīl.

He is a Messenger from the Lord of all creation, may His majesty be manifest. Allah the Sublime spoke the truth when He said,

“If they do not respond to you then know that it has been sent down with Allah’s knowledge and that there is no god but Him. So will you not become Muslims?” [Hūd 11:14].

As for a discussion to analyse the phenomenon of its miraculous nature and elucidate its various aspects, it is a long discussion and it goes into details that would take us away from our main concern. Also, you know that there are written works that specifically deal with the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān and its eloquence, so refer to them if you like so that you can know the details of this matter.⁽¹⁾

If it is thus established that the eloquence of the miraculous Qur’ān is a proof against the Arabs, then the Arabs in turn are a proof against mankind. This is because when the non-Arabs see and hear that the Arabs have not been able to compile a book equal to the Qur’ān in its rhetoric and eloquence, and that they cannot even compose one chapter like it, they know from that that the Qur’ān is miraculous and is not from human speech.

Thus, this Sublime Book is the most sublime of our Prophet Muḥammad’s miracles, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

Other miracles:

Then the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, aside from the miracle of the Qur’ān, has many other miracles and they have reached us by way of authentic reports that in total have been transmitted by so many people that they exceed the definition of *tawātur*.

(1) If you would like an adequate study on the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān, refer to our book *Min Rawā’i ‘al-Qur’ān*, which contains the details of this matter.

They include the miracle of the Night Journey and Ascension, and the Qur’ān talks about it and the Muslims have made consensus that both his body and spirit did it⁽¹⁾.

They include the miracle of the moon being split in half, and the Qur’ān talks about this and it is in the Exalted’s statement: **“The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split. If they see a Sign they turn away, saying, ‘There is no end to this witchcraft’”** [al-Qamar 54:1-2].

And it has been mentioned in the ḥadīth from so many paths that the verifying scholars of ḥadīth have come to the conclusion that it exceeds the requirement of *tawātur*.

They include the miracle of water gushing forth from his fingers. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have related on the authority of Anas ibn Mālīk, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said, ‘I saw the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the time for the late afternoon prayer (*‘aṣr*) was approaching. The people were looking for something to perform ablution (*wuḍū’*) with but they could not find anything. Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, brought some ablution water in a vessel. Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, put his hand in that vessel and then commanded the people to perform ablution from it.’ Anas said, ‘I then saw the water gushing forth from under his fingers and the people performed ablution until every last one of them had performed ablution.’ The miracle of water gushing forth from his fingers was repeated more than once according to authentic narrations.

They include the miracle of the cooked poisoned sheep speaking to him, and it was a sheep that had been poisoned by the wife of Mishkam ibn Sallām, a Jewess. She presented it to him, blessings and peace be upon him, so he chewed a piece of it but did not swallow it.

(1) (tn): i.e. it was not a dream.

Then he spat it out, saying, {This bone just told me that it has been poisoned.} The ḥadīth has been related by al-Bukhārī.

They include what has been related via authentic paths regarding food being increased through his blessings, the tree stump longing for him, curing the ill through his touch, and several other suspensions of the norm which the books of the Sunnah and the Prophetic Biography are overflowing with and related through authentic paths in which there is no mistake according to any of the scholars of ḥadīth.

Know that when we talk about these miracles and suspensions of the norm that Allah ennobled Muḥammad with, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and which have reached us (as is well-known and agreed upon) via so many paths that they cannot be a lie⁽¹⁾—when talking about this there is a discussion that we have to go into to the extent that it unveils aspects of this phenomenon and what is connected to it and what has been connected to it without leaving any stone unturned. We are not prepared to sell our intellects to anyone, regardless of who that ‘one’ is, and it is self-evident that at the forefront of those who included is whoever wants to distort how we see some reality for the sake of some objective that he is aiming for or some benefit he has in mind.

So that our intellects do not fall into any trap that has been set in front of us, we should, with a quick glance, unveil certain historical events that have played a significant role with regards to believing in unseen matters in general and in miracles in particular, so that we can discover their causes and their motives and clarify what is behind them and the extent to which intellectual freedom had a share therein. Then, after that, we will talk about miracles according to the standards of science and the intellect, and whether they are classed under possible matters or impossible matters. Then we will talk about miracles according to the standard of the religion and the

(1) (tn): i.e. *tawātur*.

Qur'ān itself. Then, after that, we will humbly listen to the ruling of unblemished, sound intellect, and whatever its ruling is we will cling to it and follow it.

Firstly—a brief word on specific historical events that have played a significant role concerning the understanding of miracles:

In early part of this century⁽¹⁾, researchers and thinkers emerged in our Arab world who inclined towards a new notion concerning the study of miracles and an explanation of what position Muslims should have towards them, especially the miracles of our master Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.

The summary of this inclination is embodied in the basis that that Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has no recorded miracle other than one miracle, which is the Qur'ān. Thus, the sole miracle of his with which Allah ennobled him is this Qur'ān that came down to him. As for the other suspensions of the norm that appeared at the hands of the previous Prophets which the intellect cannot comprehend or understand, this inclination denies them, is not concerned with them and does not pay attention to those who claim them. They repeatedly say that he would always emphasise that the miracles and suspensions of the norm were not from him and that he had no control over them, and they augment this by citing the Exalted's statement: **“Say: ‘The Signs are in Allah’s control alone’”** [al-An‘ām 6:109]. They claim that this is from his lofty particularities, blessing and peace be upon him, and thus he would not address people with that which they did not understand nor would he deal with them with anything that was beyond the limits of the knowledge that humans comprehend.

You can read these words and find this inclination in many modern books today, after it had been adopted by a small number of individuals

(1) (tn): i.e. the 20th century AD.

who embraced the call to it and started preached it and because of that their names were attached to it under the slogan "religious reform", which, for specific reasons, has been spreading since that day.

We will begin by talking about the starting point of this inclination and its remote, deliberate causes and then we will discuss it, as we said, under the microscope of science and the intellect and subject it to the evidences of history itself.

* * *

The birth of this inclination in our Islamic world goes back to the history of the British occupation of Egypt.

Britain had occupied Egypt at that time and she knew that relying on her military strength alone would not grant her stability. She would not be able to put her foot on the ground in the country she was occupying, especially for the fact that the Islamic world had recently witnessed the collapse of the Islamic caliphate.

Thus she saw—as is her permanent nature—that she must seek the help of an ideological method that would change the thinking of the Muslims, take them away from this intensity in adhering to the religion, sacrificing for it and relying on it alone, and make them engage with European thought to the furthest extent possible.

Based on this motive, Britain started applying what she called social and religious reform. The first arena for this "reform" was Al-Azhar University embodied in its educational methods and intellectual path. That is because the entire country of Egypt was under the guidance and control of Al-Azhar, and its rays spread to several other Islamic countries. Thus, there was no national or religious issue, or intellectual or social problem, except that Al-Azhar was at the head, planning it, thinking about it and propelling it. Thus, no religious or intellectual "reform" would succeed, from Britain's point of view, unless it started with al-Azhar.

We should remind you at this point that in our relating of historical events and happenings we are not following the retrieval method or the method of anticipation that only those of the Western method adhere to, especially with regards to our history and our Islam. Rather, we are following the sound scientific method that we have clarified and have been following. Maybe you will ask, 'How do we know that Britain laid out this plan for herself and was unable to do anything against Islam and its Azhar?' Listen to what was said by Lord Lloyd, the High Commissioner for Egypt at that time, in his memoirs, which he called *Egypt Since Cromer*:

He says, 'The indigenous religious education was in reality controlled almost completely by the University of El Azhar, a stronghold of Moslem orthodoxy, and at this time, by reason of the arid scholasticism of its teaching, an undoubted barrier to educational evolution. The students who attended it carried away with them a great deal of arrogant fanaticism and very little elasticity of mind or imagination [pay close attention to the meaning of these words]. It would have been an immense step forward, therefore, if the El Azhar could have been persuaded out of its rut, for so long as it remained in this stagnant condition, no real progress was easily imaginable. But if such an eventuality was beyond the bounds of possibility, then the only apparent hope lay in reforming the secular education which competed with it, until it became both popular and profitable'⁽¹⁾.

As for the scope of this development and "reform", he relied on the point of weakness that the Arab and Islamic nation was sensing at that time with regards to the scientific renaissance in Europe and the various discoveries and inventions that had taken place within it due to the scientific explosion that had not been there before.

(1) (tn): Lloyd George, *Egypt Since Cromer* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), 1:158-9.

Therefore, the “reform” plan was to instruct leading Arabic and Islamic thinkers that the like of this renaissance happening in the Islamic world depended on developing a path that would lead to understanding the religion and Islamic theology in a way that agreed with accepted scientific thought.

This meant that it was necessary to rid religious thought of every unseen reality that is not understood or included within the matrices of modern science.

How quickly did those who were fascinated and captivated by the modern European scientific renaissance, and Western civilisation in general, respond to this call, those in whose hearts faith had never been firmly established and the realities of which had never been consolidated in their intellects. They started to have certainty-motivated by that new fascination along with the weak faith they already had—that the only way to have a renaissance similar to the European renaissance was emancipation from many of the religious principles attached to the theology.

Britain did not have to—and her suggestion had sucked in a fair number of Arab and Muslim thinkers—weary herself much by following up on the plan, for she felt assured that these people would carry out the desired work. All she had to do was get them closer and put them in charge of intellectual activity at Al-Azhar so that they could reinforce its methods and use it to spread this “new reformist” epidemic throughout Islamic thought.

For the sake of this “reform”, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh was brought forth and put in charge of a comprehensive reform in Al-Azhar’s domain, following the foundations that we have clarified.

One of the outcomes of this was the appointment of Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī as a Shaykh of al-Azhar University and the appointment of Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī as chief editor of Al-Azhar’s

magazine, *Nūr al-Islām*,⁽¹⁾ which had wide circulation at that time, after its chief editor had been the great scholar, the late Muḥammad al-Khidr Ḥusayn.

As soon as these people and other shad assumed their new positions, the preaching of this new method in understanding Islamic theology began, and it is a method whose goal is to ignore all unseen matters that do not fall under the microscope of tangible, empirical science, and at the forefront of these are the various miracles.

We have seen how Farīd Wajdī started publishing a series of bold articles that he presented to people under the title ‘The Muḥammadan Biography In the Light of Science and Philosophy’, in which he says, ‘Our readers will have noticed that in what we write in this biography we strive not to overstep the bounds and go into miracles, as long as it is possible to justify them according to normal causes, even if some exertion is required’⁽²⁾.

We have seen how Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh wrote about theological issues in a strange and odd way in which he departed from the consensus of the Muslims and the self-evident facts of the authentic Islamic creed. This was when he defined a Prophet and a Messenger in his notes on *Sharḥ al-Jalāl al-Duwānī*, for he says, ‘I say: a Prophet is defined as someone who has a natural disposition towards the truth in both knowledge and action. In other words, he only knows what is true and he only does what is true in accordance with wisdom, and this is from his natural disposition, i.e. he does not need contemplation or reflection. If he also has a natural disposition to call his people to what he is naturally disposed towards, then he is also a Messenger. If not then he is only a Prophet’⁽³⁾.

(1) (tn): i.e. The Light of Islam.

(2) See the magazine *Nūr al-Islām* 7, no. 11 and what follows.

(3) *Ta’līqāt al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh ‘alā Sharḥ al-‘Aqīdah li Jalāl al-Dīn al-Duwānī*, p.3.

We have seen how he ended up, in commenting on Sūrat al-Fīl⁽¹⁾, interpreting an unequivocal verse by saying that what is actually meant by flock after flock of birds and stones of hard-baked clay is smallpox⁽²⁾.

We have seen how a book emerged during that same period of time that analysed the Prophetic Biography in a new way, called *Ḥayāt Muḥammad*⁽³⁾ by Ḥusayn Haykal. He says in the introduction, 'I have not just taken and accepted what has been recorded in the books of the Prophetic Biography and ḥadīth because in this research I have preferred to follow the path of science'.

We have seen how Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, at that time, rushed to endorse it, and he wrote an introduction to it in which he said, 'The overpowering miracle of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is only in the Qur'ān, and it is a rational miracle'.

We have seen how attributes like 'genius', 'greatness' and 'leadership' spread with regards to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant his peace, in place of the attributes of Prophethood, revelation and Messengership, covering them and removing them from consideration.

This is how this inclination was formed and developed into a new intellectual school that spread its philosophy from the minbar of Al-Azhar. How quickly did it have the anticipated effect upon the various strata of society under the shadow of this sinister occupation, and this was after there had been long battles over it which we have no scope to discuss here.

(1) (tn): i.e. The Elephant (105).

(2) *Tafsīr Juz' 'Amma* by Muḥammad 'Abduh, p.120; contemplate the unequivocal and clear meaning of the words in Sūrat al-Fīl and then tell me how it can be feasible to believe in the supernatural truths of the Qur'ān, which are far more remarkable than the story of the elephant, and then turn to the text of the Qur'ān and interpret flocks of birds and the stones that they threw to be smallpox.

(3) (tn): i.e. The Life of Muḥammad.

You ask me now, 'What did Britain get out of achieving this objective and developing religious thought in this fashion in people's minds?'

What Britain got out of it was to weaken the religious obstacle in the souls of those people for whom the religion was the greatest motive and instigator and the final authority in everything, as Lord Lloyd said in the statement we quoted earlier. This is because if the Islamic creed could be stripped of the notion of miracles, the result would be that the Muslims would dismiss the entire Islamic creed without even knowing it, for the entire creed is based on the greatest miracle of all, which is revelation, as you know. Thus, however starts deeming rational suspensions of the norm as farfetched and denying them and interpreting them, then, without doubt, he will deem as farfetched the phenomenon of revelation as well because it is considered the apex of all miracles. This is what pushed Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh to explain Prophethood in a way that completely removed it from the reality of revelation, as you have seen in his definition of a Prophet.

As she worked to firmly establish herself in Egypt, Britain did not feel restricted by any obstacle in front of her greater than the obstacle of "religious fanaticism", according to the expression of Lord Lloyd, as you have seen. In order to achieve her objective, she had to demolish this obstacle in her path. After that, she would be able to put the scattered European mentality in place of the Islamic mentality, which is proud of the Islamic method, and then develop the same practical ways of life in accordance with what she wanted after removing the previous authority from them or that authority weakening until it becomes just an outward form of Islam.

This fact is made clear to you in the words of the famous English orientalist Gibb in his book, which he wrote in English, called *Whither Islam*:

'The net result of all this educational activity has been to secularise, in the measure of its influence and to a large extent unconsciously, the outlook of the Moslem peoples. This, and this almost exclusively, is at the heart of all effective westernisation in the Islamic world, and forms the criterion by which we may estimate the relative strength of modern and of conservative opinion. Islam, as a religion, has lost little of its force, but Islam as the arbiter of social life is being dethroned'⁽¹⁾.

It has been made clear to us, as it has been made clear to every researcher, that the proponents and advocates of this reform school did not achieve any scientific renaissance like the one in Europe, which was what they believed would happen and had been made to believe by Britain, the specialists in the art of deceit and deception and playing with people's mind, who turned their minds into other than the minds of Muslims. The followers of this "religious reform" got nothing out of it but two real losses, together, for they no longer remained upon the reality of their religion and they had not found any scientific renaissance⁽²⁾.

Secondly—miracles according to the standard of science:

After that we say: in order for what Britain did to be deception, as we have clarified, is it for us to be affected by that and merely react by believing in miracles however they are and whatever the verdict of science or the intellect is therein?

No, it is not for us to be affected in this way, just as a sane person should not disbelieve in Allah's essence because of imitation or a mere reaction. Likewise, a person's faith in Allah or in miracles has no value if it is based on imitation or mere reaction.

(1) (tn): *Whither Islam* by Hamilton Gibb (New York: AMS Press, 1972), p.334-335.

(2) One of the biggest indications of the true nature of this "religious reform", and which cannot be hidden, is that you will not find any group of people from those who oppose Islam and are antagonistic towards it except that they bless this "religious reform" and celebrate it.

Indeed the standard that judges every situation is the sound, free intellect, or you can say that it is indisputable knowledge that is not tarnished by conjecture, for the result is the same.

When we ask about science's verdict regarding the truth of miracles and their possibility, what we mean by science, first of all, is its exclusive meaning as used by specialists in the various natural sciences. Then, what we mean by that is knowledge⁽¹⁾ in its general sense, which is the understanding of something as it actually is based on evidence.

Thus, what is the verdict of science, based on the former meaning, and the extent to which it is possible for them to occur?

Science responds—based on the former meaning, of course—by saying that it has nothing to do with suspensions of the norm and looking into their possibility from a scientific angle. This is because science in its exclusive meaning is nothing other than the practical application of external experiences far from removed, in their first phase, from inspiration of the intellect and contemplation and connected to specific, material subject matters. Then, they themselves impose themselves on the intellect according to what observation and experience indicate. The task of the intellect after that is to do nothing but explain them and analyse them as they are in reality. If you want to ask this science, i.e. this specific practical application, for its opinion regarding miracles, it will say to you in its silent language, 'Miracles are not the subject matter of my research, and thus I have no verdict to give on it, unless a suspension of the norm happens right in front of me and in that case becomes a subject matter that is ready to be looked at and experienced and then explained and elucidated, and at that point I would be able to give a verdict on it. As for presuming a specific situation in my mind, for example fire being detached from the capacity to burn, and then giving a verdict

(1) Ar. *'ilm*, which means by 'knowledge' and 'science'.

on it, i.e. analysing it and describing it as is my business and my job, that would contradict my nature and my domain and what I have restricted myself to.'

At that point you move on and ask knowledge (i.e. the second meaning) for his opinion regarding miracles and his verdict on them. He will say to you, 'You are asking me about the possibility of miracles, which are matters that violate the norm. Before this, you asked me about the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and I responded by telling you that He exists by necessity and He is the One in Whose essence there is no uncertainty or doubt. Do you see me (and I have clarified Allah's existence for you based on decisive evidences and obvious proofs, and explained to you that He is the Creator of all things along with their causes and systematic arrangements) contradicting myself and saying that miracles (which are nothing more than suspensions of the norm) are classified as impossible and cannot possibly take place?' How can you expect knowledge to contradict itself, for it has been established repeatedly that Allah is the causer of causes and the link between them and things they cause? Then someone else says, 'The system of causes and things caused is necessary and cannot possibly be annihilated.' How can you expect knowledge to tell you, 'The system of the universe is possible' and then come back to you and say, 'No, it is actually necessary'?

Indeed, this is science's answer in clear, concise words, and it is an answer that every sane person on earth who is faithful to the truth can hear and bear in mind. The philosopher Malebranche says, 'We only see the uninterrupted sequence of events. We do not see the link that links one part to the other, so why does this link remain hidden from us? It is because it is something divine; nothing like it exists in creation'⁽¹⁾.

(1) See the book *Mawqif al-'Aql wa al-'Ilm* (4/34).

Listen to what the English scientist William James says,

'The force that created the world is not incapable of removing something from it or adding something to it, and it is easy to say that such a thing cannot be conceived by the intellect, but that which is said to be inconceivable is not inconceivable to the level of the world's existence'⁽¹⁾.

In other words, if a part of this world did not exist, and it was said to someone who denies miracles and suspensions of the norm and cannot conceive of their existence, 'There will be a world in such-and-such shape', he will promptly reply, 'This is inconceivable', and his negation of that will be stronger than the miracle that he is denying, even though after its existence there would be no surprise or perplexity in his intellect, and he would look at it without saying, 'The existence of this is something that is neither possible nor conceivable'.

If you do not believe in Allah's existence at all, Mighty and Majestic is He, you have every right to deny miracles and not conceive their occurrence. However, at that point, it is not for you to ask science about them, or to speak in its name or to relate anything from it. Believe whatever you want and express your dogma however you wish, but without constantly repeating the word 'science' or using it to embellish anything you are saying.

At the very beginning of your meeting with it, science immediately says to you, 'That which you see in things and which you call the system of causation is nothing more than an uninterrupted link that you see with your eyes, and how preposterous is it that that would require its continuation to be necessary and its disruption to be impossible. Indeed, nothing can stop the prime causer⁽²⁾ nullifying this inseparability and apparent link that you see, even if prolonged

(1) Ibid. (2/133).

(2) (tn): i.e. Allah.

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(1) Ibid. (2/133).

(2) (tn): i.e. Allah.

familiarity and continuous connection would make you surprised and astonished at its occurrence.

Indeed, science says you, 'If you contemplate, you will see that what is familiar and what is unfamiliar of the phenomena of the universe is all a miracle in reality if you have not neglected to notice the Sublime Creator, for the stars are a miracle, the movement of the celestial bodies is a miracle, the law of gravity is a miracle, vegetation is a miracle, the human intellect is a miracle, the nervous system in man is a miracle, the circulation of blood in him is a miracle, and man in his essence is miracle! However, you forget—due to prolonged familiarity and continuous witnessing—the miraculous aspect in all these things, and thus out of ignorance and delusion you reckon that miracles are only those matters that suddenly disturb or change what you are used to and familiar with'.

Science says to you, 'What is the value of sane person's intellect if it takes what it is accustomed to as a standard for believing and disbelieving in things? This is remarkable ignorance on the part of such a person, regardless of how advanced he claims to be in terms of civilisation, culture and understanding.

* * *

And you can ask: how could the leaders of the "religious reform" deny all miracles apart from the miracle of the Qur'ān while believing in Allah, Mighty and Majestic?

The answer is that none of them ended up at this denial by means of any rational or scientific thinking that they adhered to. Rather, they ended up at this conclusion because of a psychical influence that carried them to it. They had been dazzled by the vision of Western civilisation and it dimmed their sight such that they could not look at it properly. They were captivated by the word "science" at a time in which they had no proper capacity to understand its meaning. At the same time, England exploited them in this situation and made

them understand that "science" cannot be advanced towards unless miracles and unseen matters are denied. They, they took the word "science" and used it as soap to wash their minds and their studies of anything called a miracle or a suspension of the norm.

Indeed, any scientist⁽¹⁾ today would feel compassion for their contradictory, incoherent thoughts when they read them in their books, which are filled with the words of "science" but do not even contain a semblance of it. Read the introduction to the book *Ḥayāt Muḥammad* by Ḥusayn Haykal and you see him repeatedly boasting and extolling himself: 'I have not just taken and accepted what has been recorded in the books of the Prophetic Biography and ḥadīth because in this research I have preferred to follow the path of science.' Indeed, you see him reassuring you that he has not even accepted what has been established in al-Bukhārī and Muslim, maintaining respect for science!

What kind of person is this who would not have compassion for the mentality of a researcher who thinks that what al-Bukhārī relates within wonderful, amazing shackles of scientific circumspection, which is something to boast and be proud of, is a deviation from the mainstream of science while at the same time thinking that following the way of the Westerners, in the methods of retrieval, guesswork and anticipation, maintains respect for it and adheres to its method and mainstream?

If the way of the Westerners in studying the life of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, were the scientific way that led to the truth, as is the opinion of Ḥusayn Haykal, and not the way followed by our Muslim predecessors, there can only be one of two possible conclusions: either the Westerners believe in the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, if Ḥusayn Haykal thinks that it is the truth, or he himself denies his Prophethood if he does not think that it is the truth.

(1) (tn): or scholar.

We have seen how Israeli broadcasting chose this book and no other, in Ramaḍān of this year,⁽¹⁾ in order to broadcast certain sections of the Prophetic Biography. Was that because Israeli broadcasting is absolutely intent on not broadcasting anything of the life of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, unless it is based on purely scientific foundations?

It suffices if you want to be certain of the lofty, scientific value of a book that analyses the life of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to know that it is the book that was chosen by the Jews to use in presenting religious programmes to Muslims in their state-directed broadcasting.

Indeed any thinker knows that this “reform” school was based on only one pillar, which is infatuation with the word “science” and lacking its contents.

Here we are today and we can see that it is science itself that has swept this “reform” school away from the path of the intellect and research and how the examination between science and miracles has returned and become purer than it was before. The phase of being dazzled has ended and the eye has come back to seeing the light with every capacity it has.

We have looked and we see that reality mocks the prognosis of Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī when he said, while suffering from one of his emotional trances due to the word “science”,

‘Indeed when the Islamic East saws its religion displayed in the world of myths, which have been included in all religions, at the hands of modern Western science, it did not utter a word because it saw the matter as greater than merely making excuses. Instead, it delved into heresy and clung to it out of certainty that it would be the final outcome

(1) This was Ramaḍān 1968.

of all its brethren when they arrived at its scientific rank’⁽¹⁾.

Thus, if the word “science” at that time was being uttered on his tongue while he was in his trance speaking such gibberish, then indeed today the reality of science in calling out with its loudest voice from above the highest summits of existence and saying that Allah is the reality of all realities, and that His true religion is the secret of all existence. It does not harm us that some people are heretics and disbelieve in both Allah’s essence and the essence of science.

* * *

Thirdly—miracles according to the standard of the religion and the Qur’ān:

Then someone might ask, ‘But the Qur’ān contains that which indicates that it was not from the Messenger’s affair to come to people with suspensions of the norm, such as the Exalted’s statement: **“Say: ‘The Signs are with Allah. I am only a clear warner’**” [al-‘Ankabūt 29:50]. The Exalted One has also said, **“They say, ‘We will not believe**

(1) This is from an article that Farīd Wajdī published in *al-Ahrām* on the 30th of August, 1937 in response to an article written by the great scholar Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī. You can read the story of the two articles in the book *Mawqif al-‘Aql wa al-‘Ilm* (4/407). At that time, Farīd Wajdī had not yet been appointed chief editor of Al-Azhar’s famous magazine *Nūr al-Islām*, but it is these ideas of his that led to his appointment to that position later, after the great and immense scholar Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Ḥusayn, as part of the reform accomplishment that the British occupation had planned with regard to Al-Azhar University in particular and Egyptian society in general (see p.185 of this book). Of course, he concealed these ideas of his after he became the chief editor of the great Islamic magazine that speaks in the name of Al-Azhar. He kept them under his tongue for a period of time, during which he kept readers busy with other articles and researches, but it did not take long after that before he started publishing a series of articles under the title ‘The Muḥammadan Biography In the Light of Science and Philosophy’, in which he called on people to understand the life of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, as the Westerners understand it, remote from every suspension of the norm and miracle regardless of its type.

you until you make a spring gush out from the earth for us; or have a garden of dates and grapes which you make rivers come pouring through; or make the sky, as you claim, fall down on us in lumps; or bring Allah and the angels here as a guarantee; or possess a house built out of gleaming gold; or ascend up into heaven—and even then we will not believe in your ascent unless you bring us down a book to read!’ Say: ‘Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a human messenger?’” [al-Isrā’ 17:90-93]. Thus, does not the position of upholding miracles and suspensions of the norm contradict what is unequivocally stated in the Qur’ān?

The answer is that these verses came down to subdue the idol-worshippers’ mockery of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, not as an answer to a sincere question that they had put forward, as you can see from the arrangement and style of the verses. Allah the Exalted knew that what they were asking for and demanding in terms of signs was nothing but mockery of the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, and that they were only going deeper into their disbelief and obstinacy. They made it clear that they would not accept a Message coming to them from Allah unless it was an angel from the sky handing it over to them, not a human being on earth like them. If Allah had known that there request was sincere, that they had a good intention and they were only trying to affirm the veracity of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, He would have carried into effect whatever would have convinced them. However, their affair corresponded to how Allah the Exalted described them in another verse when He said, “Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say, ‘Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!’” [al-Hijr 15:14-15]⁽¹⁾.

(1) See the author’s *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, p.123 of the second edition or any subsequent edition. (tn): In the English translation, see p.152-155.

How can verses determine that he, blessings and peace be upon him, had no miracles when the Qur’ān itself talks about the miracle of the Night Journey. It says, “Glory be to Him who took His slave on a journey by night from the Masjid al-Ḥarām to the Masjid al-Aqṣā” [al-Isrā’ 17:1]. It also talks about the miracle of the moon splitting, for it says, “The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split. If they see a Sign they turn away, saying, ‘There is no end to this witchcraft’” [al-Qamar 54:1-2]. It also talks about the miracle of angels coming down at the Battle of Badr, for it says, “Remember when you called on your Lord for help and He responded to you: ‘I will reinforce you with a thousand angels riding rank after rank’” [al-Anfāl 8:9].

Once you know all of this, we say, and we are talking about matters of theology, which should only be based on indisputable proofs, that we only enjoin upon ourselves to affirm the miracles whose information has reached us via mass-transmission⁽¹⁾ in accordance with the well-known conditions of narrating. All the miracles that have been narrated by the scholars of the Prophetic Biography and of ḥadīth, of which we have mentioned some, greatly exceed the conditions for mass-transmission, and thus rejecting all these miracles is disbelief and one leaves Islam by consensus. As for rejecting what has been affirmed therein by *āḥād*⁽²⁾ narrations, this does not make someone a disbeliever, even if it is in the authentic books of the Sunnah, but it is considered one of the blemishes of sinfulness, without doubt.

And what we have said so far about miracles is sufficient, and with Allah is every success.

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(1) (tn): i.e. that which is *mutawātir*.

(2) (tn): i.e. authentic but not at the level of mass-transmitted.

5. Prophethood is Not Acquired

This is the last issue, and in reality it is the clear outcome of the previous four issues. If the foundation of Prophethood is revelation, whose meaning we have defined, and miracles are something with which Allah assists His Prophets by His power and His will, then that means that Messengership only comes about by Allah's choice, Mighty and Majestic is He, as He says in His Masterful Exposition, **"Allah knows best where to place His Message"** [al-An'ām 6:124]. Likewise, He says in another verse, **"Allah chooses Messengers from the angels and from mankind"** [al-Hajj 22:75].

However, despite that, we have preferred to do set aside a discussion under the title, and this is in order to make the reader aware of the scientific, fortified, barrier between the meaning of Prophethood in reality, which is indicated by science and the intellect after both of them indicate the existence of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and the meaning that exists in the delusions of those who still imagine that Prophethood is trade in and of itself in the market of illuminism or soothsaying or magic or astrology, for they are from the trades of that market. However, Prophethood is distinguished from them by that which is more than trivial.

There are still some people who hold the position that in the distant path, soothsaying was the sanctified trade in life. Then it advanced with the advancement of the human intellect and turned into astrology. Then it advanced further with scientific and intellectual progress and turned into magic. Then it arrived at the peak of its refining stages when it emerged in the manifestation of Prophethood, which comes into the hearts of those who have it while they are in their sanctums of seclusion and spiritual illuminism. As for how these phases give birth

to one another, what the relationship is that links each phase to the other, what proof there is for it in history and scientific research, that is something else and these people have not gone and researched it!

In the imaginations of these people, it is natural for Prophethood to be an end that is arrived at through striving and acquiring, just as magicians arrive at magic through striving and acquiring. These people, if they understood the Prophethood of Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would not understand it unless it based on this foundation: the Messenger exerting effort and striving his utmost until he becomes a Prophet, and a Prophet in the illusions of these people is a synonym for the word "reformer", which is often repeated on their tongues. In this they are deceiving themselves before they deceive anyone else.

On account of this, they do not want to affirm that the Qur'ān is other than the speech of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. They do not want to understand that he was given a miracle that happened to him and they do not want to understand revelation other than that it is reflection and contemplation. This is so that it can be granted to them to imagine Prophethood having a meaning of acquisition, and that might not be understood by them with respect to conceivable analysis, but it suffices that, in their conception, it is described as acquired.

After finishing the discussion on the phenomenon of revelation and what scientific research has disclosed regarding it, after that finishing the discussion on miracles and what scientific proof has disclosed regarding it, and after finishing, prior to that, the discussion on the One Who exists by necessity, may His majesty be manifest, and what indisputable proof has disclosed regarding it, there is nothing we can do but be certain of the truth that has come forth from all of these issues, and it is that Prophethood is nothing but revelation from Allah for whomever of His slaves He wants, in order

to warn people of the Day of Meeting and to remind them of what their predecessors were reminded of regarding what they will be wet with after death and the rights that their Creator, may His majesty be manifest, has over them.

Thus, it has nothing to do with soothsaying or magic or astrology, and it is not something that people strive for through artifice and effort.

Also, you should know that no one differs with this truth and resorts to speech that has no source in either science or even conjecture except someone who was a disbeliever in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, beforehand, and thus he interprets the events of time that he sees and hears throughout history in accordance with that rejection of the Creator that was already established within himself. There is no interpretation that agrees with what is within himself unless he swindles his intellect with those kinds of illusions that can roam in wide pastures without any limits.

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Conclusion

On the Difference between *Islām* and *Īmān*

Now we have finished explaining the facts connected to the section on Prophethood and by doing so we have finished analysing the second half of the testimony of Islam, which is the testimony that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Thus, we have finished explaining the two halves of the testimony of faith, which a Muslim must affirm in order for his faith to be complete.

If you believe in the studies and facts connected to divinity and you believe in what we mentioned after that by way of facts connected to Prophethood, and you have submitted to the obligations of prayer, fasting, the pilgrimage and zakāt, certain of their obligation and the necessity to establish them, implementing the command of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and realising your slavehood to Him, then you have fulfilled all the essentials of the *islām* that the Prophet were sent with in general and our Prophet Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in particular.

Perhaps you will ask: 'Is there are difference between the realities of faith (*īmān*) and *islām*? Are there any differences in their conditions?

The answer is that there is a difference between what each of *islām* and *īmān* apply to, but there is a constant connection between the two in reality.

Islām, as you know, is surrender and submission both the two testimonies and the abovementioned obligations, and it must be articulated on the tongue.

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Islām, as you know, is surrender and submission both the two testimonies and the abovementioned obligations, and it must be articulated on the tongue.

Articulating on the tongue does not suffice unless one uses the word *ashhad*,⁽¹⁾ and one must surrender with unequivocal words to the obligatory nature of the obligations that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has commanded.

Islām, therefore, is the surrender of a person's external being, and the rulings of Islam applying to such a person depend on it, such as preserving life, the lawfulness of getting married and the legislation regarding inheritance.

As for *īmān*, it is affirmation in the heart of everything we have mentioned, such that there is no doubt in one's soul connected to any of the facts of Islam that we have mentioned, and salvation on the Day of Standing before Allah, Mighty and Majestic, depends on it.

Thus it is made clear to you that the rulings of Islam in both this life and the Hereafter do not apply to a person unless he is described with both *islām* and *īmān*, and that is because he submits in his heart and acknowledges with his tongue.

Whenever someone articulates the two testimonies or something else, in reality that will not benefit him at all unless he submits to it affirms it with his heart. The rulings of this life only apply to the outward because it is not possible to know what people keep concealed within themselves, and the tongue bears the burden being truthful in speech.

However, there has been a difference of opinion amongst the Imams regarding the person who believes in his heart only; will that save him on the Day of Resurrection or will it be insufficient unless he affirms and acknowledges with his tongue as well?

Al-Nawawī related from a group of scholars that certainty of the heart alone is insufficient for salvation on the Day of Resurrection unless it is with faith, affirmation and pronunciation on the tongue.

(1) (tn): i.e. 'I testify' or 'I bear witness'.

In his commentary on *Al-Arba'īn Al-Nawawīyyah*, Ibn Ḥajar [al-Haytamī] preferred what most of the Ash'arīs have gone with, as well as some of the verifying scholars amongst the Ḥanafīs [i.e. Māturīdīs], which is that affirmation on the tongue is only a condition for worldly rulings to be made applicable. As for the Day of Resurrection, certainty of the heart is sufficient.

And Allah knows best.

Part Three: The Universe

* * *

Introduction

What we mean by universe is everything that is actually and with certainty known to be from that which exists, such that Allah, Allah and Allah have commanded that they be known, and that we be firmly convinced of their existence.

That which exists includes man, the past, the present and all other created beings and things, such as the stars, the celestial bodies, the earth and the sea, as well as all the various animals, plants, things and universal movements that they include.

Thus, all these things are referred to as *al-kawn* or *al-awjād*.

Part Three: The Universe

With this you know that the word *al-kawn* is used to mean all that exists, and that it is not used to mean only the things that are visible to the eye. Thus, what they mean by *al-kawn* is all created beings, such as man and the animals, the plants, the things and the universal movements that they include.

We see no linguistic justification for limiting the word *al-kawn* to the things that are visible to the eye, when it is known that it is used to mean all that exists, and that it should include everything that is created, and that it should be as extensive as possible.

Based on this, the definition of the word *al-kawn* is as follows: the facts connected to the following:

Firstly: Man

Secondly: The Jinn

Thirdly: The stars and the celestial bodies

Fourthly: The earth and the sea

Fifthly: The animals

Sixthly: The plants

Seventhly: The universal movements

Eighthly: The things that are created

Introduction

What we mean by universals is everything that is decisively and with certainty known to be from that which exists, such that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has commanded that they be known and that we be firmly convinced of their existence.

That which exists includes man, the jinn, the angel and all other created beings and things, such as the skies, the celestial bodies, the earth and the seas, as well as all the various causes, caused things and universal movements that they include.

Thus, all these things are referred to as *al-mukawwan*⁽¹⁾ or *al-kawn*⁽²⁾.

With this you know that what we mean by the word *al-kawn* is the same meaning that is intended by some of those who talk about civilisation when they divide existent beings into three components: the universe, man and life. Thus, what they mean by the universe are all created beings apart from man and life, whether they are living or inanimate.

We see no linguistic justification for limiting the word 'universe' to this meaning, when it is known that in reality it is a synonym for the word 'existence'⁽³⁾, and thus it should include everything that is described as existent.

Based on this, the discussions in this part will comprise of studying the facts connected to the following:

Firstly: Man

Secondly: the Jinn

(1) (tn): i.e. that which is created or formed.

(2) (tn): i.e. the universe.

(3) Ar. *wujūd*.

Introduction

What we mean by universals is everything that is decisively and with certainty known to be from that which exists, such that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has commanded that they be known and that we be firmly convinced of their existence.

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Firstly: Man

Secondly: the Jinn

(1) (tn): i.e. that which is created or formed.

(2) (tn): i.e. the universe.

(3) Ar. *wujūd*.

Thirdly: the Angels

Fourthly: the Law of Causation in the Universe

As I have said to you, what concerns us of the facts of these existent beings is what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has made us legally responsible for knowing and then for having faith in and being firmly convinced of.

There is no doubt that whatever is beyond that is not our concern, such as other facts connected to the natures of certain things and their structure, or the discovery of what is unknown about them. This is because there is no religious ruling attached to them other than the legitimacy of researching them and trying to discover them.

* * *

1. Man

A Muslim must know the following facts about man and his reality. Then he must be certain of them within himself and upon them establish his faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

- a. Man is the best and most noble of Allah's creations.
- b. Man is created, as a species, from the element of earth. Procreation—as a source—begins with the first man, Adam, may peace and prayers be upon him.
- c. Man is created, from the first genesis, in the most perfect outward form and the best stature. He did not evolve as a species at any point in his history nor did he gradually move from one genus to another.

Let us now consider, in all clarity, these three facts separately.

A. Man is the best and noblest of Allah's creations:

This fact is established by two proofs, the first of which has been transmitted to us with truthful certainty while the second is rational proof.

As for the truthful transmission, it is His statement, Mighty and Majestic: **"Verily we have honoured the Children of Adam and conveyed them on land and sea and have provided them with good things and favoured them greatly over many we have created"** [Al-Isrā' 17:70]. There is also His statement, Mighty and Majestic: **"We said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam', and they prostrated, with the exception of Iblīs. He refused and was arrogant and was one of the disbelievers"** [Al-Baqarah 2:34].

The proof in both of these verses is clear in proving what is sought, and there is no ambiguity in knowing that man is the best of creation with the exception of the angels. These two verses and many others

clearly state this, but there has been some study and research into the generalization of this ruling, even with regards to the angels as well.

The reason for this incertitude and ambiguity is Allah the Exalted's statement at the end of the first verse that we mentioned: **"...and favoured them greatly over many we have created"**. It shows—for whoever takes the evidence of speech⁽¹⁾—that there are some other creations that man is not superior to; and there is no doubt that this should be referring to the angels, based on what is affirmed in the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunnah clarifying their superiority and their immense rank.

As for those who do not stick to what the speech evidences and find what the text articulates to be sufficient, they have stated that the use of the word "many" (*kathīr*) is actually a substitute for the word "all" (*kull*). There is no indication that the opposite of "many" is "a few" and thus the verse, generally speaking, endorses the superiority of man over the rest of creation.

Those who state the absolute superiority of the angels over man include 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with him, and it is the opinion of al-Zujāj according to what al-Wāhidī has narrated⁽²⁾ and they used for a proof what we just mentioned from the end of the verse as well as His statement, Mighty and Majestic, about the angels: **"but they are honoured slaves. They do not precede Him in speech and they act on His command"** [Al-Anbiyā' 21:26-27]. There is also The Exalted's statement: **"...who do not disobey Allah in respect of any order he gives them and do what they are commanded to do"** [At-Taḥrīm 66:6] and the ḥadīth in Al-Bukhārī, may Allah be pleased with him: **"Whoever remembers Me in a gathering, I remember**

(1) Ar. *dalīl al-khiṭāb*; this is a byword for *mafhūm al-mukhālafah*, or understanding the opposite. For example, if some people will be veiled from Allah on the Day of Judgment out of His wrath, then this means that others will see Him out of His pleasure.

(2) See *Tafsīr al-Rāzī* 5/261.

him in a gathering that is better than His". Al-Qurṭubī said that this text proves the superiority of the angels⁽¹⁾.

The position of the majority of Ahl us-Sunnah wa Al-Jamā'ah is that the elite of mankind, from the prophets and the righteous, are superior to the elite of the angels. They are the ones whom Allah has specifically chosen to mention in His Noble Book. The masses of mankind, and they are the pious from amongst the Muslims, are better than the masses of the angels. Their evidence for this includes Allah the Exalted's statement: **"But those who believe and do good deeds are the best of created beings"** [Al-Bayyinah 98:7]. "Created beings" (*al-bariyyah*) comprises the angels. They also use the ḥadīth that has been narrated by Abū Dāwūd and others in which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said, **"Indeed the angels lay down their wings out of pleasure for the seeker of knowledge"**. Likewise, they also used as proof the fact that Allah has given man the essentials of legal responsibility from which he becomes deserving of reward and recompense for the obligatory acts that Allah has commanded him to do. It should also be noted that Allah has placed in man various passions and desires and if he fights them and overcomes them he deserves a reward that the angels do not deserve, and this is because their created constitution does not contain any of these passions or desires⁽²⁾.

Al-Qurṭubī said: 'There is no way of decisively proving that the prophets are better than the angels, or a way to decisively prove that the angels are better than them, because the required way is what has been transmitted from Allah the Exalted and His Messenger (i.e. that which has been mass-transmitted and is irrefutable) or the consensus of the Muslim nation,⁽³⁾ and there is nothing there'.

(1) See *Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubī* (Al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān).

(2) See *Sharḥ Al-'Aqā'id An-Nasafiyyah* p.501.

(3) (tn): Ar. *ijmā' al-ummah*.

As for the rational proof, it includes the following points:

The first point is that the human soul is distinguished from all other souls and other existent beings by this amazing and astonishing power, and this power is indeed the intellectual power to comprehend the realities of things and thus it is the key to subjecting many of the universe's phenomena to man and bringing them under his control.

The peculiarities of this intellectual power include the fact that it is the power that manifests within itself the light of knowing Allah the Exalted and with it the light of Allah's magnificence is made radiant. The one who possesses this power is prepared to be a worshipful slave of his august Creator, manifest is His Majesty. As a result man becomes the first manifestation of Allah's divinity, Mighty and Majestic.

If this is the case then it is clearly necessary for the human soul to be the most noble of souls that exist in the universe (if we make an exception for the angels due to exceptional considerations concerning them.)

The second point is the proofs of the veracity of Allah the Exalted's statement: **"And He has made everything in the heavens and everything on earth subservient to you. It is all from Him"** [Al-Jāthiyah 45:13]. that we see by way of experience and witnessing, as you can see that everything from the movements of the celestial bodies to the ordered system of the universe and the various functions of all created things: they are all commensurate with man's needs and serving him. Thus, in relation to this existence that surrounds him man is like the axis of a circle, in that he draws towards himself various other creations that strive in perpetual and constant revolution in order to weave together for him the best of what he needs in life and to cater to his various requirements and needs.

One of the necessities of this, as you can see, is that this being, who has this position with regards to all other created beings and

they have their position with regards to him, becomes the best of them and most noble of them without exception.

The third point is the attributes that Allah the Exalted has placed inside man, which, on the whole, are remnants from the attributes of Lordship, such as knowledge, power, arrogance,⁽¹⁾ the desire for authority and domination, and so forth.

When you think deeply, you know that man only believes in Allah, Glorious and Majestic, and fills his heart by exalting Him and revering Him by means of these attributes that have been placed within him, because with his partial, limited knowledge he has an idea of Allah's vast, unlimited knowledge. With his partial, limited power, he can have an idea of Allah's power, which holds sway over everything. With the little property that he has, he can have an idea of Allah's vast dominion, which includes everything that is and everything that ever was. If Allah had not placed within him these samples from His attributes, man would not be prepared to realise the augustness of Allah the Exalted and the glory of His authority.

If man, in reality, is a repository for shades or remnants of the attributes of the Lord of Might, Glorious and Majestic, then it is preferable for him to be the most noble and honourable of created beings.

In summary, man's preference over all other created beings (with the exception of the angels), is a decisive and established fact which is proven by mass-transmitted, authentic narrations as well as sound, rational proof. Thus, it is obligatory for the Muslim to believe it.

As for his preference over the angels, this is something that is possible. The proofs are inconclusive and this is why there has been a difference of opinion. Perhaps the safest thing to do would be for us to refer the truth of the matter to Allah's knowledge, Glorious and Majestic is He.

(1) (tn) Ar. *takabbur*, which is rightful for Allah and blameworthy for man.

it is subject to the means of research, experience and witnessing, for indeed Allah's speech has invited us to research the truth and seek certainty therein.

C. Man is created, ever since his first formation, in the most perfect outward form and in the most beautiful stature:

The discussion about the first formation of man is the last thing that is not subject to empirical proofs or that which is witnessed and tangible. On the whole, it is a historical discussion in which one cannot use thought or use more than the two proofs of scrutiny and retrieval, and they are two hypothetical proofs as we have previously clarified. It is impossible for a decisive creed to be based on something from its results.

If Allah, Mighty and Majestic, had not spoken to us about anything decisive in this regard we would not have clung to any stipulation and believed in it decisively.

However, when it comes to that which is authentic and mass-transmitted, in which there is no room for any doubt or conjecture whatsoever, we have His statement, Exalted is He: **"Indeed we have created man in the best of stature"** [al-Tīn 95:4]. The fact that *al* is added to *al-insān* (man) means that it includes all of mankind; every individual human being.

An example of this is His statement, Exalted is He: **"O Man! What has deluded you in respect of your Noble Lord? He Who created you and formed you and proportioned you..."** i.e. made you symmetrical, straight and standing upright in the most beautiful of shapes and forms.

One of the things that confirms what the Qur'ān has established is what has been narrated in the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections from Abū Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, who said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said: 'Allah

created Adam in his form', i.e. since his creation he has had this essential form, which he continues to have and which he is known by, i.e. he did not emerge by transferring from one form to another. The pronoun 'his' in 'his form' goes back to Adam.

There is another opinion which says that the pronoun goes back to the essence of Allah the Exalted, and what is meant by form is the attribute, i.e. He created him to have knowledge, will, wisdom, hearing, seeing and so forth, and these are attributes of Allah the Exalted. (See page 137⁽¹⁾ of this book).

Whether the attribute goes back to Adam, as is the majority opinion and is what is understood outwardly from the ḥadīth, or whether it goes back to the essence of Allah the Exalted, the ḥadīth confirms the decisive proofs found in the Qur'ān, which show that Allah honoured Adam from the very beginning of his creation.

And, if that is the case, we must know that man has never transferred, throughout his entire history, from one species to another in any evolutionary fashion, as it is said that he developed from one genus to another, or gradually evolved from the outward form of one species to have the outward form of another species.

This verdict is the decisive conclusion to the three matters that we have mentioned about man, which are:

He is the best and noblest of Allah's creations.

He is created from earth and he multiplied from the first man, Adam, peace be upon him.

He is created, ever since his first formation, in the most perfect outward form and in the most beautiful stature.

* * *

(1) (tn): i.e. p. 111 of this translation.

The Development of the Theory of Evolution When Faced With this Fact

As you can see, this decisive fact that every Muslim must believe in completely contradicts what is called the theory of evolution, which adopted another historical assumption about man, which is that he comes from a series of links in a chain of differing species, gradually developing from the simple to the complex, from the primitive to the advanced, in both form and thought. What is the Muslim's position regarding this contradiction and difference of opinion?

The answer is that his position should be the position that is adopted by any intelligent person when faced with a contradiction between a scientific fact and a theoretical matter. Therefore, there is no doubt that the scientific fact is that which should be destined to remain, and it is inevitable that the theory will be abrogated as long as it contradicts this fact. The theory cannot go together with the fact.

Now we must clarify (again) how the opinion we have mentioned regarding man's reality is an established, scientific fact while the opinion that man developed and evolved from other species is nothing more than a theory, or rather an assumption, and it is not supported by any scientific proof whatsoever.

First of all, we should know that this matter is not attached to anything tangible or anything that can be witnessed. Thus, there is no point in looking for evidence in support of it from tangible, visible experience. This is because the research is not connected to man as he currently is, such that the topic could be subjected to the microscope of experience and witnessing. Rather, it is connected to discovering an aspect of history therein that has passed and disappeared. All

that can possibly be of assistance with regards to research, such as looking into aspects of similarity between humans and other animals and so forth, are from the means of research that are based on what happened in the past only, and from the ways of supposition and analytical scrutiny, and there is a massive difference between these means and the proof of experience and witnessing.

Furthermore, this issue is not subjected to the law of correlation or sound analogy based on the foundations of thorough investigation. Thus it is, as we have said, an attempt to discover a history that is distant and deep in the past and there is no connection between us and it, i.e. decisive scientific proof.

If the matter had come to an end at this point we would have kept to the side of doubt or merely conjecture, without subjecting our intellects to any hypothesis or theory that may be wrong or right.

But the matter did not come to an end at this point, because definitive, mass-transmitted information (*khabr*) has disclosed it, and we have already demonstrated and shown what this is.

You have learned that the source of the transmitted information is clear; the speech of the Qur'ān, and you have learned from what has preceded that the Qur'ān is not the speech of Muḥammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, but rather the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, containing decisive proofs that have already been explained. Before that, you learned the decisive proof for Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic.

Therefore, we must be certain that what the information of the Qur'ān comprises is the truth because it is Allah's speech, Mighty and Majestic. He Himself explains to man how He created him.

Therefore, it has been established that Islam's discussion regarding man's origin is decisive, scientific fact.

As for Darwin's discussion, it is nothing more than a theory and a supposition, by his own admission and the consensus of all the other

scientists, regardless of whether they have supported him or gone against him.

His theory about the origin of species is nothing other than one link in a chain of continuous, varying theories. All of them suppose that life on the face of this earth developed in a mechanical fashion and then they differ from one another in various ways in order to explain this development and analyse it.

Let us consider the most important of these theories and let us reflect on how each one of them emerged and then how each of them grew within the scope of evidences that each one of them relies on. After that we will look at how each theory ended in failure, because they were misguided and weak, under the force of refutations and criticisms which rushed towards them from all sides.

Lamarckism:

Perhaps the oldest of these theories and the most important of them is what the literary scholar Lamarck put forward, i.e. the lack of affirming the species as they are but rather going back to the varying conditions that changed according to each one of them, such as their region, nourishment, kind of life, the nature of their climate, and so forth. Thus, if one of these conditions varies it affects how habits vary, and if habits vary—continuously—it affects how functions and task vary, and if they vary it affects—over time—how the shapes of bodies and organs vary.

Lamarck supported this theory of his with a number of living examples that he became very interested in. Vertebrates that feed without chewing conceal their teeth and they become hidden within the cheeks. Fish and anteaters are examples of this. The mole that lives in darkness enjoys two very small eyes that can barely function.

Despite this analysis that was put forward by Lamarck, such as explaining the mechanism of evolution that he supposed, in the

beginning he only had a little bit of success. Then it began to spread in the minds of people and they began to consider it, after some time, to be the best explanation for the phenomenon of evolution. The theory stuck with the name of its proponent, and they started calling it 'Lamarckism'.

However, once the theory was put under the microscope of research and criticism, and empirical proof and examination, its lights were put out and it turned on its heels and was stripped of the power that it had over people's minds.

Critique of Lamarckism:

Let us now consider some of the criticisms that were directed towards it:

The first: according to Lamarck, the progress of evolution is directed towards benefitting creatures and guaranteeing that they continue to carry out their function and task, as well as preserving harmony, to the greatest extent possible, between the creature and the circumstances of nature, however they may differ and develop. We have noticed this from the examples that he relied on.

However, witnessed reality does not affirm the continuation of this progress, as indeed many species of creatures have become extinct and disappeared under the force of what is called natural factors. According to the suppositions of Lamarck, these creatures are supposed to evolve in accordance with varying natural states as well as unexpected circumstances and atmospheres and environments that they may experience, such that the creatures can survive as a species, at least.

Secondly, the most that Lamarck noticed, regarding the aspects of evolution that he fundamentally relied on for his research and as a scale for his supposition, was carried out within a singular chain looking at the factor of inheritance, i.e. before the creatures

encountered these circumstances or environment or states that made the creatures resort to some kind of evolution or formation in order to be in harmony with them.

Thus, the skin of a child, from birth, is thicker at the soles of the feet than any other part of the body.

Camels have calluses that occur in the joints of the wrists and elbows such that they suit the surfaces that bear the weight when the camel kneels down, and these calluses are present in the child of the she-camel from birth.

Bone extensions are found in the thighbone of the human embryo, just as they are found in a fully developed adolescent, i.e. in accordance with the pressures that the bones experience when a person walks.

It is not possible for us in these situations to justify the matter by looking at how the creatures were affected beforehand by circumstances and states,⁽¹⁾ especially considering the fact that the science of genetics has made it clear that the fundamental structure of a living being is not due to external factors but rather it is an essential foundation according to the association of chromosomes and inherited traits in each individual species. Claiming that the matter is other than this inherited fashion throughout remote, ancient times is nothing but a claim that contradicts on-going, witnessed reality⁽²⁾.

Thirdly, irrespective of the criticism that has been aimed at this supposition, it deals with another issue that is far more restricted than the subject of our comprehensive research, which deals with analysing the supposition that says that the evolution of creatures is complete from species to species and is not limited to changing shapes, colours and organs within creatures. Rather, it happens to the

(1) See *Ilm al-Hayāt al-Hayawāniyyah* by Dr 'Abdul Ḥalīm Swaydān, p.130.

(2) *Al-Taṭawwur wa al-Insān* by Dr Ḥasan Zīnū, p. 17.

entire formation of the creature, starting from its natural inclinations and thought processes all the way through to its structure, hair, talons and nails within conditions that cannot be seen between them and this transformation from one species to another, i.e. conformity and harmony.

The analysis that Lamarck's theory goes back to, with regards to the phenomenon of partial forms and organs that are affected over time according to the environment, circumstances and the atmosphere, only covers a very tiny part of the fundamental research topic, which still requires analysis and elucidation to answer several questions that have imposed themselves on this field.

Darwinism:

In 1871⁽¹⁾, Darwin published his famous book called *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in which he tried to take evolution back to a merely mechanical explanation, such that it was as independent as possible of any teleological reasons, but despite that he adopted the principle of 'survival of the fittest' as the cause for evolution.

Darwin derived his theory from the book *An Essay on the Principle of Population* by the economist known as Malthus, who claimed that the population increases exponentially while the proportion of food does not increase, except arithmetically⁽²⁾. This leads to competition and struggle between individuals for food that is vanishing and insufficient⁽³⁾.

Thus, he thinks that there are attributes that might not be of outward importance and that there is disparity between individual

(1) (tn): The first edition of the book was published 1859. This author is actually referring to the sixth edition, which was published in 1871.

(2) (tn): i.e. Food supply is incapable of keeping up with population growth.

(3) *Al-Insān wa At-Taṭawwur* by Dr Ḥasan Zīnū as well as *Ilm Al-Hayāt Al-Hayawāniyyah* by Dr 'Abdul Ḥalīm Swaydān.

beings regarding how far they can be described as possessing them. They have an actual effect in preserving the one who has them and preparing him for a superior level. When these individual beings enter into a conflict with nature for the sake of staying alive a natural selection process takes place that leads to the survival of the fittest individuals and those most suited to survive, because they are distinguished by these attributes or they are distinguished by having achieved the highest ranks of these attributes.

Darwin attests to the eligibility of this selection process based on these formidable factors, which destroy many offspring of living creatures over time. Thus, he turns our attention, for example, to the female elephant giving birth six times in her life. If we were to use this as a basis then the offspring of every single male and female elephant at the end of seven hundred and fifty years would result in approximately nine million elephants. It is very clear that the reality of nature is nowhere near this calculation⁽¹⁾.

Thus, the superiority that creatures enjoy, such that they are a species in relation to the other species, or an individual in relation to other individuals, enables each creature to eliminate others, and not just in the origin of existence but the in the particularities of existence as well, including some beneficial intricacies.

Through this competition that took places eons ago in the world of living things, and the result of latent attributes differing in each one of them—which is the sole force behind this competition—a ladder of ranks emerged which categorized these living creatures into all kinds of varied and disparate species. On the ladder of these ranks, man is nothing other than one from a group of these simple creatures that took part in the competition, secured a single ring for himself

(1) *The Origin of Species* by Darwin, p.195. (tn): The author is referring, here and in the notes below, to the Arabic translation of the sixth edition by Ismā'īl Maḥṣar, entitled *Aṣl al-Anwā'*, published by Maktabah al-Nahḍah in Beirut and Baghdad.

as a species, and it was due to good luck that he had these latent attributes that pushed him head on through the course of competition and nominated him to acquire the highest ranks of life, such that his colleagues differed from him in all kinds of disparate ranks.

However, what proof did Darwin rely on in saying that man is like all other creatures and that he evolved from one species?

Darwin derived his proof for what he said from the sciences of comparative anatomy and embryology, and from the vestigial structures that are found in man.

He found, for example, that parts of man's skeleton could be compared to their corresponding parts in some other creatures, and the same goes for the muscular and nervous systems. Even the composition of the brain and its parts could be compared between man and other creatures and many aspects of similarity could be found between them.

Likewise, with reference to the proofs that he derived from embryology, he thought that the process of the embryo's formation in man was nothing other than a repetition of the stages of the stages of life that are found in lower-ranking creatures, just as the early phases of the embryo's development are very similar in man and other creatures. He noticed, for example, that the backside of the embryo ends with what resembles a tail in the embryos of both man and dogs, and with the evolution of the embryo the tail in man's embryo is concealed while it remains in that of dogs.

Likewise, Darwin drew conclusions from aspects of psychological interdependence between man and other kinds of creatures, such as the phenomenon of self-awareness as well as psychological feelings and emotions⁽¹⁾.

(1) See Darwin, *The Origin of Species*; Chapter 8: Instinct, p.454-500 and Chapter 11: On the Geological Succession of Organic Beings. Also see Dr Anwār 'Abdul Ḥalīm, *Qisṣat al-Taṭawwur* p.68.

Critique of Darwinism:

Dr 'Abdul Ḥalīm Swaydān says, 'The Darwinist theory has stirred up a lot of criticism.' Then he presented some of them and afterwards stated that they were only a tiny portion of the many criticisms that have been directed at Darwinism.

Let us briefly consider these criticisms, and others, taking into account the problems that Darwin himself found with his theory and admitted, regarding many of them, that they were unsolvable problems and he was content not to attempt to solve them or respond to them!

1. Indeed the reality that we witness clearly contradicts what Darwin called the law of selection and the survival of the fittest, because the universe—after all the time that has passed—still resounds with the fittest, the fit and the unfit from all kinds of creatures, starting with unicellular creatures all the way to monkeys and then man! If the law were true, one of its simplest, obvious requirements would be that the competition between creatures had passed the starting point so that we could at least assume that evolution and natural selection were moving along slowly. However, this starting point is still bursting forth with its various weak creatures that are still enjoying life and its particularities concerning livelihood, just like the other creatures that they are competing with.
2. There is no dispute concerning the fact that every species of creatures experiences heavy losses over time due to various natural factors that overcome them. This is a witnessed fact that is not denied. As for calamities⁽¹⁾ being a result of a race and a competition that came to an end with the selection of the fittest and most powerful, this is—as Dr 'Abdul Ḥalīm Swaydān says—another matter. Indeed both death and being saved from

(1) (tn): i.e. events that led to mass extinctions.

death are often down to mere coincidence, not special attributes within the individual. The great swamp that dries up and the tsunami that bursts on to the sand, both leave behind all kinds of corpses, while others are saved from death. However, it is not death that chooses the weak for itself and it is not saving that chooses the strong for itself. Rather, the entire matter is down to coincidence.

3. Death also contradicts what Darwin saw as nature dealing with a group of living beings according to the law of natural selection and survival of the fittest. How can the fittest survive if death is lying in ambush for them? On the other hand, statistical studies, which have been confirmed by the scholars in this field, have shown that death befalls, first of all, individuals who disappear from the normal pattern such that afterwards there remains the average pattern and that which is less than it.⁽¹⁾ They⁽²⁾ are a consequence that contradicts Darwin's theory and its predictions.
4. The process of natural selection is not a mechanical procedure, whether we consider it to be manufactured or natural selection. Rather, it is a means that is aiming towards an objective, and striving towards some objective is considered the most complex of procedures in terms of understanding and realisation. How can it be possible to attribute it to "nature", for which there is no escape from explaining its work and its effects, regardless of how disparate the terms regarding it are, as being either mechanical or merely haphazard?

The selection of the fittest must depend on a law that distinguishes

(1) (tn): i.e. the natural pattern. In other words, those who are most fit for survival are usually destroyed first in natural disasters, manmade calamities and other forms of mass extinction.

(2) (tn): i.e. statistical studies.

the fittest from others and justifies it and directs it. What law does nature rely on in its election and what is the justification that nature digests and is then influenced by?

5. Indeed protecting life from being infiltrated by a weak being that does not have all the attributes of fitness is easier for nature—if the matter were in nature's hands—than overlooking it. Even if it(1) did infiltrate life and take its share from it and then others like it started taking part in all the functions of life, nature would become aware of it immediately and then start grabbing it and others like it from amongst the other creatures in order to eliminate them, and then by eliminating them correct the mistake that it should have never committed in the first place.

If this weak being is sentenced to falling behind then it will cease to exist, because it is not from the category of the fit or the fittest. Why would nature bring into existence that which it wants to eliminate today or hold behind from the main group? As for what we said, that the matter of bringing into existence is not in nature's hands, it is more appropriate that the matter of correcting the universe should not be in its hands, by taking it⁽²⁾ out of existence and eliminating any mistakes in its existence.

6. If the principle of natural selection is the factor behind continuous evolution in living beings, and this evolution is always aiming for the fittest, then how come we do not find intellectual capacity in many creatures to be more evolved and advanced than others, considering that this advancement is for the benefit of all of them? How come the highest ranking monkey has not acquired the same intellectual capacity that man has acquired, for example?

Darwin looked into this problem that he faced, as more than one

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(2) (tn): i.e. a weak being.

writer has stated, but he did not answer it. Rather, he commented on it by saying:

"A definite answer to the latter question ought not to be expected, seeing that no one can solve the simpler problem..."⁽¹⁾.

Then he looked into this problem which, with many other problems, stood in the way of his theory, another time and in another way, and another time he affirmed his inability to respond to it. He said:

"It has often been asked, if natural selection be so potent, why has not this or that structure been gained by certain species, to which it would apparently have been advantageous? But it is unreasonable to expect a precise answer to such questions, considering our ignorance of the past history of each species..."⁽²⁾.

7. It has been established through study that many of the plants of Egypt have not changed their position over several, long centuries. This is made clear from the domestic animals that are carved in some of the relics of Ancient Egypt, or have been

(1) *The Origin of Species*, p.412. (tn): p.127 (n.p: Feedbooks, Sixth Edition) The full quote is: "Lastly, more than one writer has asked why have some animals had their mental powers more highly developed than others, as such development would be advantageous to all? Why have not apes acquired the intellectual powers of man? Various causes could be assigned; but as they are conjectural, and their relative probability cannot be weighed, it would be useless to give them. A definite answer to the latter question ought not to be expected, seeing that no one can solve the simpler problem, why, of two races of savages, one has risen higher in the scale of civilisation than the other; and this apparently implies increased brain power." One can also see: <http://www.literature.org/authors/darwin-charles/the-origin-of-species-6th-edition/chapter-07.html>

(2) *The Origin of Species*, p.447. (tn): p.235 (n.p.: Feedbooks, Sixth Edition) One can also see: <http://www.literature.org/authors/darwin-charles/the-origin-of-species-6th-edition/chapter-07.html>

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preserved by means of mummification. We can see how they resemble the same creatures that are alive, or, rather, there is maybe no difference at all.

Indeed, there are numerous animals that have not undergone any change in their structure since the beginning of the Ice Age, despite the fact that they have been placed under several influences as the climate has changed. Indeed, many creatures have migrated vast distances over the surface of the earth, and Darwin himself admitted this.

So, where is the reality of the theory of evolution, regarding which there is no doubt?

8. Finally, we say that everything Darwin relied on does not hinder that which has been firmly witnessed and described, i.e. he noticed the phenomenon of resemblance in living beings, starting with the first cell all the way through to the most advanced of species, which is man.

However, what connection does this affirmed resemblance between creatures have with claiming that all of them originate from one creature? Is it not possible that the differences between man and other creatures, such as monkeys for example, could be the result of a difference in essence and not a difference in stage, even though resemblance can be seen between them? I.e. why is not this gradual sequence in resemblance from living beings based on this gradualism and resemblance itself ever since Allah, Mighty and Majestic, created them?⁽¹⁾

If there were some measure of evidence that was empirical and witnessed then it would be possible to put an end to this questioning at

(1) (tn): As an additional example, two people possessing similar features is not definite proof that they are related. It is merely circumstantial. Furthermore, where are the transitional forms? There is absolutely no proof whatsoever for their existence.

its very foundations and to bring us the decisive statement regarding this matter. However, neither Darwin nor the scientists that preceded him or came after him in this matter have been able to give us any evidence in this regard.

Neo-Darwinism:

The many criticisms that were directed at Darwin's theory had great influence in causing it to collapse and go through a period of decline and degradation. However, a group of researchers went back and extracted from its rubble another new theory that came to be known afterwards as Neo-Darwinism and considered as the corrected version of Darwin's theory.

These researchers were led by the Dutch scientist Hugo de Vries.

Then a group of British and American biologists followed him and supported him in this.

The most important opinion that this new school of thought espoused and considered as a fundamental difference that distinguished it from Darwin's theory, and was preferred by these other researchers, was that evolution was only based on circumstances that happen by surprise and coincidentally, as opposed to being based on selection of the fittest, which was Darwin's opinion. They say that after the changes have happened by surprise and spontaneously, in which no hidden cause is evident, they are registered immediately in the genetic supply, such that they are transferred genetically to the offspring.

Therefore, this school of thought does not accept the idea of selection that Darwin talked about at great length in his assumption and imagination. Rather, it grants coincidence the principle role in forming and multiplying species, while acknowledging that the environment that the creature is raised in has an effect on the quantity and quality of the change.

Critique of Neo-Darwinism:

Nevertheless, this "corrected version" of Darwin's school of thought, itself, was the target of many other criticisms and it fell into contradictions that it could not escape from. These criticisms include:

1. The supposed evolution, which is the foundation of the research, is progressive no doubt, as it is a proposed explanation for the gradual progress of creatures in light of it. Thus, is it the job of mutation to be involved with this steadily progressive evolution?

It is known that mutation always involves attributes of impairment and disarray. Are death and the means and preliminary steps leading to it anything other than the most prominent aspects of mutation? How can this steadily advancing evolution be explained on the basis of this impairing and disarraying factor?

In other words, why does not mutation direct itself, one day, towards the procession of creatures and cause them to relapse backwards instead of the difficult and persistent climb forwards?

There is no doubt that any objective answer to these questions is like an elephant such that it destroys this new theory from its very foundations.

2. If it is mutation that governs the change and evolution that happens to living beings, then what requisite remains for supposing that living beings come from one source? It is known that this supposition was only met with acceptance by its proponents based on the progressive similarity that they noticed between these creatures, and noticing this is what made them state the principle of natural selection of the fittest.

If this principle is blown away by the supposition of mutation, then the phenomenon of progressive, tangible resemblance between categories of living beings has to be ignored, and at that

point the supposition that all living creatures come from a single source is no longer tenable.

This is how the opinion of mutation carries within itself the factors that destroy the idea of evolution from its very foundations.

3. The opinion of adopting the law of genetic inheritance for mutagenic progression, which supposed that a creature went, at some point in its lifespan as a species, or a family, for an evolutionary leap,⁽¹⁾ without indicating anything that could even be quasi-evidence for this leap, is nothing more than a cover for the weakness of this opinion behind the system of inheritance.

Therefore, it is natural for the researcher to ask about any encyclopaedia that can show us, even remotely, any period in history in which there was some form of mutation for some animal, i.e. before it became hidden in the innermost core of the genetic unseen!

In conclusion:

In conclusion, all of this was a summary of the opinions and modern schools of thought, which contradict and invalidate one another, about the thesis of evolution concerning living beings in general and human beings specifically. Thus, after all of that, what does the scale of scientific vision register regarding the subject? Indeed it immediately registers the following points:

First of all, the idea of evolution and what follows from it, such as natural selection of the fittest and so forth, has not passed the stage of thesis, which attracts contradictory evidences and inferences. Everything that has been said or written is nothing more than failed

(1) (tn): What is being referred to is the new Neo-Darwinist addition of the doctrine of punctuated equilibrium to account for massive leaps and advancement over short periods of time. This was done when Neo-Darwinists recognized that a beneficial mutation over billions of years could theoretically be undone over that same amount of time.

attempts and detached researches that have created more problems than they have solved.

Secondly, the nature of this struggle that we have examined is a nature of perplexity and confusion, regarding a subject matter that is cut off. It is not a nature that has a methodical progression⁽¹⁾ that would allow us to understand a matter that is known as fact and which has a defined scope and size.

Thirdly, based on the aforementioned, it is not possible to establish any scientific verdict regarding any of these researches or opinions, and it is also not possible for us to consider them as scientific fact in and of themselves such that the intellect passes them by with conviction and acceptance. The continuous sequence of refutation and criticism that trails it is the profound evidence for this.

Why do they criticise all other detailed theories and then adopt the idea of evolution on the whole?

However, you might ask: if this is the case then why do the researchers and critics themselves go back and accept the idea of evolution on the whole, regardless of following one of the specific schools of thought that we have discussed?

The answer is that these researchers, in the beginning of their research, did not put down all the objective possibilities that are connected to this matter under one microscope in order to look at them and examine them. They rejected, from amongst the possibilities, the matter that they had no desire for and did not look at or give or any thought whatsoever. Indeed, it is that which is most likely to be the truth, as the Creator of the universe Himself has explained in His Book that was sent down to the Seal of His Prophets, upon them be blessings and peace. Then they confined themselves to the circle that agrees with them, or the end of the road that they placed in front of

(1) (tn): i.e. a mind of its own.

themselves. Within this limited scope they started researching and asking about the first creation and the origin of creation and man's relation to other creatures.

Therefore they had to—and they sentenced themselves to this ideological prison—choose the best solutions and answers that they found in front of them, and if they did not find them they should have—in any case—not returned to their research with empty ideas, because returning to some supposition—regardless of the doubts and suspicions surrounding it—is more suited to the aspirations of thought and intellect than returning to a negative, confused position.

And so on, as accepting any school of thought that assumes the idea of evolution in the life of man and other creatures, regardless of the contradictions and holes therein, is closer to scientific thought than saying that the earth or the sky were suddenly split by a Being who is intricate in His making and wondrous in His design. He intimidates the earth with His power and turns to the moon and the stars with His might. If a person does not accept this then he finds his intellect compelled to accept this. At this point one hesitates regarding choosing the first solution, despite its weight, when one finds oneself confined to a narrow strait that only contains one of these two solutions.

There is no doubt that this choice is based on logic! However, it is relative logic that is harmonious with the mentality of whoever has placed himself within a closed circle or restricted his thoughts to a dead-end road. From here he is considered logical and being honest with himself when he says, while in this constriction of his: 'This is all that I can see in front of me, so what can the intellect do other than choose the more likely solution?'

However, this is immense ignorance and dangerous self-deception on the scales of thorough examination and unrestraint throughout the world of fact, with all available possibilities, without making desire, the environment, traditions or the authority of benefit the judge.

As for us, in our scientific researches and studies we have adhered to the principle of examining and probing all possibilities and hypotheses and we place all of them under one microscope in order to look at them and research them. Therefore, it is upon us to consider all the foundational possibilities that are attached to the subject, including affirming the Creator, Mighty and Majestic, which implies an explanation of this matter.

We have examined the possibilities that have been hypothesised by the proponents of evolutionary thought, and we have seen all of them suffer under the pressure of serious criticisms directed at them. We have seen all of them struggle with and invalidate one another, as you have seen in our brief examination.

Therefore, we must turn and pay attention to affirming the Creator Himself, and He tells us about the matter in detail and about its reality. In our previous lessons we arrived at absolute certainty regarding Allah The Exalted's existence based on various, decisive scientific proofs. We also arrived at certainty regarding the prophets and messengers being sent, including the Seal of the Prophets, Muḥammad, peace and prayers be upon him. We have arrived at certainty in the Books that have been sent down as revelation from Allah to them, and all this was based on logical, scientific proofs that were explained in their place.⁽¹⁾ We have seen the Creator, Mighty and Majestic, affirming that He created man in the best of stature and that he multiplied from the progeny of Adam, whom Allah created and gave him realisation and taught him how to state and express things, the names of which He had inspired him with. Then we saw Him talking, in this clear speech of His, about those who argue about how they came into existence and the explanation that they must rely on when they imagined the supposition of man's evolution. They covered their ears in order not to hear the Creator Himself explain

(1) (tn): i.e. earlier in this book, *Kubrā Al-Yaqīniyyāt Al-Kawniyyah*.

the matter—we have seen Him talk about them in a way that spreads awe and the majesty of Lordship. He said:

“I did not make them witness to the creation of the heavens and the earth or to the creation of themselves, and I would not take as assistants those who lead astray” [al-Kahf 18:51].

This is how we have researched and examined deeply. Thus, in which possibilities do we believe and affirm? Do we close our eyes and our thoughts and believe in one of these aforementioned schools of thought, in spite of the gaps they suffer from and the fact that they are collapsing under the weight of criticisms, and reluctantly make our intellects accept one of these suppositions and affirm it, or do we believe in acknowledging the Creator Himself, after we have believed in Him and completed our faith in His Messengers, His Books and His Qur'ān?

No free, intelligent person would hesitate for a single moment regarding the fact that we must—after having faith in Allah, His Messengers and His Books—cast aside the nature of these disturbed and confused people and affirm the information that is sound and established and has reached us decisively and via so many channels of transmission that it is impossible to be a lie.

We say all of this regarding the story of man's creation, which has been explained in the Speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, clearly and decisively, leaving no room for uncertainty or interpretation.

As for the other creatures, it is for every intelligent person—as the Qur'an has not explained their origin—to look into the matter if they wish, but they must not let their thoughts wander between hidden suppositions that have no basis or proof and they must only place their certainty in that which meets their criteria for being definitive, scientific proofs, adhering to the principle that Allah the Exalted enjoined upon us in:

“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, hearing, sight and heart will all be questioned” [al-Isrā’ 17:36].

* * *

The idea of evolution is one thing...and the equated, gradual progress between species is something else:

Then you must know that everything we have mentioned is connected only to the hypothesis of man’s evolution, after he first came into existence, from one species of creatures to another.

As for the equated, gradual progress and what exists at the foundation of creation, it begins from inanimate objects, then plants, then animals and then man. This has been an established fact ever since the most ancient times until today, and the eye cannot deny it, let alone the intellect and the mind. Thus the series of categories of existent beings contains consistency in the path of ascending to the highest, which makes it similar to grains laid out in succession, gradually becoming more and more beautiful and rare.

All of the scientists⁽¹⁾ have talked about the phenomenon of this ascending alignment, which is the most manifest proof of the Creator’s existence and His awesome power to create.

Ibn Khaldūn says: ‘One should then look at the world of creation. It started out from the minerals and progressed, in an ingenious, gradual manner, to plants and animals. The last stage of minerals is connected with the first stage of plants, such as herbs and seedless plants. The last stage of plants, such as palms and vines, is connected with the first stage of animals, such as snails and shellfish which have only the power of touch. The word “connection” with regard to these created things means that the last stage of each group is fully prepared to become the first stage of the next group. The animal world then widens, its species become numerous, and, in a gradual

(1) (tn): Ar. ‘ulamā’, which could also be translated as scholars.

process of creation, it finally leads to man, who is able to think and to reflect’⁽¹⁾.

Ibn Miskawayh says: ‘As for the connection of created beings of which we say that wisdom is prevalent in them, such that if we were to produce and present the masterful plan of The One True Lord regarding all of them, such that the last of each species is connected to the first of another species, it thus becomes like one thread that strings several pearls in a perfect combination, until all of them come from one knot. This is what we draw attention to in order to prove Allah’s help...’⁽²⁾ Then he started to go into greater detail about this gradual manner and elucidate it, in the same way that Ibn Khaldūn clarified it.

This is a fact that is witnessed and described, and established as it is, ever since the most ancient times that man is aware of. All scientists see it and talk about it. Indeed, all intelligent people who look at it are astonished, and it has nothing to do whatsoever with what Darwinists and their ilk have supposed, i.e. the evolution of each species from the species beneath it, be it man or any other species. It is a false hypothesis without any foundation, as you have learned.

Something rather curious is that some of those who are still enchanted by the researches and ideas of Westerners take every idea that is put forward by a Western researcher and try to find something that corroborates it from the Qur’ān, or the Sunnah or what some Muslim scholar has written! Whenever they hear the theories of evolution they rush to find something that corroborates it from any Islamic source, even if they find what has been said by many Muslim

(1) *Al-Muqaddimah*, p.47 and 48, Būlāq edition (tn): *The Muqaddimah; An Introduction to History* by Ibn Khaldūn, translated by Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) p.75.

(2) *Al-Fawz al-Asghar* by Ibn Miskawayh, p.90.

scholars such as Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn Miskawayh. They put their hands in it as if they have discovered a priceless treasure chest and then they set about confirming, with vehement pride and joy, that Muslims scholars preceded Darwin by hundreds of years!

We say: if it were the case that a Muslim scholar preceded Darwin with regards to his theory that he put forward, all it would show is that that scholar preceded him in idiocy and falsehood, and we turn to Allah to free us from that.

Indeed it is one of the most severe forms of oppression to strip sound speech of its meaning and then attach falsehood to it in order to support the whisperings of liars, being diligent in blindly imitating them and following them wherever they go.

* * *

2. The Angels

We have only put the discussion on the angels and the jinn in the section on the universe, despite what may occur to the mind, which is that they only come under unseen matters, i.e. that which we do not witness and do not know about other than what the Book has informed us of them—because what we mean by the universe is everything that has been created in the universe, i.e. its existence is established. What we mean by unseen matters is everything that Allah has told us will happen but has not yet happened in the fullest sense. Based on this meaning, the angels come under the first category, for they are creating and they are described as being and existing, like the jinn, and the Prophets, blessings and peace be upon them, saw some of them. The fact that people in general do not see them does not make the matter problematic, for you know from what we have already mentioned that that which is witnessed is only a subset of that which exists.

The discussion here is connected to their existence, their attributes and the duties of some of them.

As for their existence, this is indicated by truthful, mass-transmitted reports from Allah, may His majesty be manifest, and from His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him. As for that which has come to us from Allah, may His majesty be manifest, there is His statement: **“The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from His Lord, and so do the believers. Each one believes in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers”** [al-Baqarah 2:285]. and his statement: **“He sends down angels with the spirit of His command to any of His slaves He wills: ‘Give warning that there is no god but Me, so fear Me!’”** [al-Nahl 16:2].

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As for what has come from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, it is his statement, blessings and peace be upon him, to Jibrīl in the well-known ḥadīth on the authority of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb when Jibrīl asked him about faith: {It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and to believe in predestination, the good of it and the bad of it}⁽¹⁾.

And in both the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunnah there are several other texts that unequivocally inform of the existence of angels.

Based on this you know that their existence is established by decisive evidence that cannot possibly have any doubt or suspicion attached to it, and thus to deny their existence is disbelief according to the consensus of the Muslims, or indeed the text of the Exalted's statement: **"Anyone who disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Last Day has gone very far astray"** [al-Nisā' 4:136]. This is because faith in the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and the Qur'ān coming down to him necessitate faith in the angels, and thus to deny their existence is to deny both the Prophethood and the Qur'ān.

As for their attributes, the details of such are from that which we have no access to, because they are from that which cannot be known except by way of reports, and there are no truthful, mass-transmitted reports that disclose to us their various states and attributes in detail. Therefore, a Muslim is not legally responsible for looking into anything in that regard in order to have faith in it, and if he does come across something in some reports or traditions then he is not obligated to have firm conviction on account of it. This is because one is not obliged to have firm conviction except in that whose evidence is decisively from the religion.

As for knowing the attributes in general, we have a path to knowing them and being firmly convinced of them that cannot be denied, and

(1) Narrated by Muslim and narrated similarly by al-Bukhārī.

our path is the truthful reports found in the Book of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. These include the Exalted's statement: **"The Messiah would never disdain to be a slave to Allah nor would the angels near to Him"** [al-Nisā' 4:172]. There is also His statement, Glorified and Exalted is He, describing the For and its gatekeepers, **"Harsh, terrible angels are in charge of it who do not disobey Allah in respect of any order that He gives them and carry out what they are ordered to do"** [al-Taḥrīm 66:6]. There is also the Glorified's statement: **"They say, 'The All-Merciful has a son.' Glory be to Him! No, they are honoured slaves! They do not precede Him in speech and they act on His command"** [al-Anbiyā' 21:26-27]. There is also His statement, Glorified and Exalted is He: **"Praise be to Allah, the Bringer into Being of the heavens and earth, He who made the angels messengers, with wings—two, three or four. He adds to creation in any way He wills. Allah has power over all things"** [Fāṭir 35:1].

In this regard, there are also the verses and ḥadīths that indicate that they have been granted the ability to take on and appear in different forms, such as His statement, may His majesty be manifest: **"...and veiled herself from them. Then we sent Our Spirit to her and it took on for her the form of a handsome, well-built man"** [Maryam 19:17]. And there are several various ḥadīths that affirm that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, would see Jibrīl in form of a man from amongst the people, and that he would often appear in the form of Diḥyat al-Kalbī.

These verses and the several authentic ḥadīths that follow them corroborate them and make it obligatory upon a Muslim to have firm conviction that the angels are described with the following qualities:

1. Slavehood to Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and thus they are not children or partners to Him, Glorified and Exalted is He.

2. They are confined to what Allah has commanded them, and thus they do not disobey any command and they do not deviate and commit anything prohibited. They constantly worship Him and their habit is to invoke him and glorify His praise.
3. They have wings that are either two, three or four in number, as has been clearly stated by the Creator, may His majesty be manifest. It is not for us to know anything about the detailed attributes of these wings and their nature, as they are veiled from us by the will of Allah and His ruling and the Qur'ān has not provided any detailed information in that regard.
4. Even though they are created from light and cannot be seen with the eyes, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has granted them the ability to take on and appear in various dense forms.

It is not possible for a believer in Allah and His Messenger to deny any of these attributes, for if he denies them or denies any one of them then he becomes a disbeliever by consensus.

As for their duties, there is no way for us to know these duties in detail with regards to all angels, as there is no indisputable report upon which knowledge can be established. However, the Qur'ān has informed us of some of these duties and thus it is obligatory to have faith in them in accordance with its elucidation and its reports, and the same goes for the names of some of them being mentioned in texts, for it is obligatory to have faith in them along with these names of theirs.

These duties include: conveying Allah's speech and His rulings to His slaves who are sent, and this is established by the Exalted's statement about the Qur'ān: **"The Faithful Spirit brought it down to your heart so you might be one of the warners."** [al-Shu'arā' 26:193-194]. The Exalted has also said, **"He sends the Spirit by His command to whichever of His slaves He wills so that he may warn mankind about the Day of Meeting"** [Ghāfir 40:15]. And it has been established by the

authentic, mass-transmitted Sunnah that the one entrusted with this duty is Jibrīl, blessings ad peace be upon him.

These duties also include carrying the throne, and the text of the Qur'ān is unequivocal in stating that the number of those carrying it on the Day of Standing is eight angels. You can read this in the Exalted's statement: **"The angels will be gathered around its edge. On that Day, eight will bear the Throne of their Lord above their heads"** [al-Hāqah 69:17].

They also include taking care of Paradise and its people, and the Qur'ān calls the angels entrusted with this duty *al-khazānah*⁽¹⁾, and you can find this in the Exalted's statement: **"And those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in companies and when they arrive there, finding its gates open, its custodians will say to them, 'Peace be upon you! You have done well so enter it timelessly, for ever'"** [al-Zumar 39:73]. There is also the Exalted's statement: **"Gardens of Eden which they will enter, and all of their parents, wives and children who were righteous. Angels will enter in to welcome them from every gate: 'Peace be upon you because of your steadfastness! How wonderful is the Ultimate Abode!'"** [al-Ra'd 13:23-24].

They also include responsibility for the affairs of the Fire and its people, and the Qur'ān calls the angels whom Allah has entrusted this matter to *al-zabāniyah*⁽²⁾, and Allah the Exalted has mentioned that their number is nineteen angels. You can read this in the Exalted's statement: **"What will convey to you what Saqar is? It does not spare and it does not ease up, ceaselessly scorching the flesh. There are nineteen in charge of it. We have only appointed angels as masters of the Fire and we have only specified their number as a trial for those who disbelieve"** [al-Mudaththir 74:27-31].

(1) (tn): i.e. custodians.

(2) (tn): i.e. the Guards of Hell, see Sūrat al-'Alaq 96:18.

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(1) (tn): i.e. custodians.

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They also include observing the deeds and behaviour of those who are legally responsible and calculating them in a clear book. Allah has given the two angels in charge of this matter two attributes: *raqīb* and *ʿatīd*.⁽¹⁾ One of them is one a person's right calculating the good deeds that he carries out and the other is on his left calculating this sins that he earns. You can find elucidation of this in the Exalted's statement: **"And the two recording angels are recording, sitting on the right and on the left. He does not utter a single word without a watcher by him, ready with pen in hand!"** [Qāf 50:17-18].

They also include guarding man during the phases of his life in all his various affairs, and Allah the Exalted has called the angels who have been entrusted with this matter *al-mu'aqqibah*⁽²⁾ and *al-hafazah*.⁽³⁾ He has said, **"Everyone has a succession of angels in front of him and behind him, guarding him by Allah's command"** [al-Ra'd 13:11]. And He has said, **"He is the Absolute Master of His slaves. He sends angels to watch over you"** [al-An'ām 6:61].

They also include the duty of taking back people's spirits. Has this duty been entrusted to a number of angels or just one of them? The Qur'ān has not given a clear answer that would decisively settle the matter, for in one verse in His Noble Book, Allah the Exalted has mentioned that which would indicate that it is a group of angels. He has said, **"Then when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail in their task"** [al-An'ām 6:61]. In another verse He has mentioned that which would indicate that it is only one: **"Say: 'The Angel of Death, who has been given charge of you, will take you back and then you will be sent back to your Lord'"** [al-Sajdah 32:11].

(1) (tn): i.e. to be watching and to be ready.

(2) (tn): i.e. in succession.

(3) (tn): i.e. those who guard or watch over.

The majority are of the opinion that the Angel of Death is one, but Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has reinforced him with a group of other angels, and thus they are like soldiers with a commander.

Furthermore, you can see that the texts have not disclosed the names of these angels whom Allah has entrusted with these various matters that we have mentioned, with the exception of Jibrīl. Thus, what is obligatory upon a Muslim to know and have firm conviction in is that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has entrusted these various duties to groups of angels. Allah knows best about their names and particular characteristics. The Angel of Death being called 'Izrā'īl is something that has been indicated by various traditions whose strength does not reach the level that would make it obligatory to be firmly convinced of it.

After what we have mentioned, maybe you will ask about the meaning of Allah appointing angels to carry out the tasks that we have mentioned, and the wisdom behind it, for it is known that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is not incapacitated by anything, such that it would be imagined that He needs someone to be in charge of certain tasks.

The answer in brief is that this is nothing but a manifestation of His authority and the sublimity of His dominion, and it shows His significative power in a tangible manifestation that suits man's imagination and what he is familiar with.

As for the detailed answer, its proper place is the discussion on the law of causation in the universe, and we will talk about it shortly if Allah so wills.

* * *

3.The Jinn

The discussion here is connected to the matter of their existence and their origin that they were created from. As for what is beyond that in terms of discussing their attributes and peculiarities and their detailed characteristics, it is not for us no mention any of them here, because the research therein is based on *āḥād* reports and conjectural, probable evidences, and most of it is from that which is differed over.

You know that for matters of theology to be obligatory they have to be based on indisputable, decisive evidences. In other words, a person does not become a disbeliever by rejecting that which is based on suppositions and drawing conclusions.

Their existence:

Their existence is affirmed by indisputable evidence that contains no probability, and the evidence is the truthful reports that the Qur'ān has brought in the form of decisive texts that contain no probability.

The Qur'ān has informed us of the jinn in several places.

These include the Exalted's statement: **"I only created jinn and man to worship Me"** [al-Dhāriyāt 51:56].

And the Exalted's statement: **"And we diverted a group of jinn towards you to listen to the Qur'ān"** [al-Aḥqāf 46:29].

And His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"He created man from dry earth like baked clay; and He created the jinn from a fusion of Fire"** [al-Raḥmān 55:14-15].

And in the Sunnah as well there are various ḥadīths that affirm the reality of the jinn and give information about them. This includes what has been narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Ishāq and all the scholars of the Prophetic Biography—and the wording is that of al-Bukhārī—in which he, may Allah bless him and

grant him peace, set out with a group of his Companions and they headed for the market of 'Ukāẓ and there was interference between the news coming from heaven and the devils, and shooting stars were unleashed upon the devils and thus they went back. They said, 'Why is there interference between us and the news from heaven and shooting stars have been unleashed upon us?' They were told, 'The interference between you and the news from heaven must be something that happened recently', so they set out and travelled to the east of the earth and its west to see what had come between them and the news from heaven. Those who had gone towards Tuhāmāh came across the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, by some date palms on the way to the 'Ukāẓ market, and he was praying the dawn prayer with his Companions. When they heard the Qur'ān they listened closely to it and the said, 'This is what has come between us and the news from heaven', and then they returned to their people and said, 'O our people, we have heard a most amazing Recitation. It leads to right guidance so we believe in it and will not associate anyone with our Lord'⁽¹⁾.

Since the existence of this creation goes back to indisputable reports that have come to us from the Book and been elucidated by the Sunnah, and their affair is known by necessity from divine informing—the Muslims have made consensus that faith in the existence of jinn is one of the fundamental requirements of faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and that denying them or doubting their existence necessitates apostasy and exiting from Islam.

Indeed, denying them necessitates two consequences:

The first is denial of something that is known to be established in the religion by necessity.

The second is denying mass-transmitted, indisputable information that has reached us from Allah, may His majesty be manifest, and it

(1) *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (6:83) (tn): See the opening verses of Sūrat al-Jinn (72).

contradicts faith in Allah, may His majesty be manifest, just as it contradicts faith in His inimitable Book.

Both of these consequences contradict Islam and the essentials of faith in Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

Their origin:

As for the origin of the jinn, i.e. the primary from which this creation was brought into existence, there is no desire to know this except by way of indisputable reports, and a report can only be indisputable and engender decisiveness and certainty when it comes from the Creator himself, and this report is found in the Exalted's statement: **"and He created jinn from a fusion of fire"** [al-Raḥmān 55:15], i.e. a pure fusion of flames that have no smoke.

Since this clear report has been established with certainty, it is obligatory upon us to know their contents and have faith on account of it.

* * *

Denying the existence of jinn is idiocy masked by the terminology of science:

If this has been made clear to you, then know that no sane person—despite what we have mentioned—should fall into the most severe manifestations of heedlessness and ignorance, such that he claims that he does not believe except in that which agrees with "science" and thus he keeps boasting that he does not believe in the existence of angels or jinn because he has never seen them or sensed them.

It is a matter of fact that this kind of ignorance while feigning knowledge necessitates the denial of many things that most certainly exist, due to one reason and it is that it is not possible to see them. There is no sane person who respects himself and then adopts this position of confusion and beguilement.

There is no sane person who understands the meaning of "science" except that he knows the famous scientific axiom that says, 'not finding something does not necessitate its non-existence', i.e. you not seeing the thing that you are looking for does not necessitate that the thing itself is non-existent. This is because that which is witnessed is only a subset of that which exists. In other words, not everything in existence is subject to the sense of sight or to all the senses. Otherwise, it would be obligatory upon a person to believe in the existence of a car, for example, as long as it is parked in front of him. Then, when its driver takes it somewhere such that it is out of his range of sight and his other senses, it would be obligatory to deny its existence.

It is hidden from the minds of some simple souls amongst the people that just as it is not permissible to believe in the existence of something unless scientific evidence affirms its existence, it is also not permissible to believe in the non-existence of something unless scientific evidence affirms its non-existence. If scientific evidence does not affirm whether it exists or does not exist, that is the situation in which man is called ignorant. Your ignorance of something does not necessitate that it exists or does not exist, as it is a description that applies to you and not the thing that is being looked for.

If decisive, scientific proof is presented to you and it decisively affirms that something exists or does not exist, it is frivolous to oppose that proof with your prior ignorance.

Mass-transmitted reports with fully-connected chains of transmission have come which clearly state, as you have seen, that angels and jinn exist based on what the Qur'ān informs. Thus, there must be firm conviction that this information has been established in the Qur'ān, as has been explained in our discussion regarding the method for verifying transmissions and reports.

It was established before that the Qur'ān is not from the composition of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and that it is the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, based on decisive evidences that were discussed in their proper place. Likewise, prior to that, decisive proof affirmed Allah's existence.

Therefore, after establishing the sequence of these decisive proofs, one must have firm conviction on account of them, and when faced with them prior ignorance has no value.

However, you know from these words that the value of mass-transmitted, fully-connected reports indicating the existence of the angels and the jinn is only drawn faith in Allah's existence before everything else. Thus, if someone does not believe in Allah first, there is nothing preventing him from affirming that a report is attributed to its source while at the same time denying the actual source. In other words, he denies the speech of the Qur'ān in terms of it being the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Indeed, it would be natural for him to do so as long as he does not believe in the source of the entire issue.

However, astonishing idiocy is concealed within the person who claims that he is a Muslim and that he believes in Allah, His Messenger and His Book and continues debating with you, or debating with the Qur'ān to be more precise, regarding the existence of jinn, for example. He has no evidence with which to argue with you other than that he has never seen the jinn and has never sensed them. In other words, he has no evidence with which to argue with you other than his own ignorance, as we have stated.

The roots of this issue are simply imitation and parroting of those who engage in the intellectual against Islam and its people. They lent their ears to them and heard them saying, 'Indeed the theology of the jinn, devils and angels is only from the myths and fables that were prevalent amongst the Arabs, and then Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, propagated them in the name of religion

and Islam! They bowed their heads to what they heard and closed their eyes and their intellect from thinking about the evidence for this claim and its motives and scientific proofs. Then they set out repeating these words without making a sound that differed with their masters.

Then when those same masters went back themselves and started talking about spirits, their presence being summoned and how to talk to them, they people once again started listening and once again they lowered their heads and believed with firm conviction without removing the cover from the intellect for the sake of any contemplation or scientific proof. Then, this time, they set out being firmly convinced of spirits and started teaching people how to summon them and speak to them and find out hidden secrets from the remote past and the distant future by means of them⁽¹⁾.

- (1) You must ask about the position of Islamic theology regarding summoning spirits and the news about this that spread through Europe and then in several parts of the Arab world.

The answer is that the world is filled with various spirits, without doubt, but Islam has taught us not to believe that anyone has summoned a spirit or spoken with it unless it has been established by the proof of experience and observation. This is because summoning and speaking are matters that are subject to the senses, and thus its evidence cannot be anything but the senses, and this was elucidated in the introduction to this book. If the proof of experience and observation establishes this in front of you then there is no objection to believing in it and affirming it. Indeed, there is no escape from believing it and affirming it. However, what remains unknown after that is the essence of this spirit. In order to remove this ignorance, it does not suffice if the spirit speaks or writes or claims by some means that it is the spirit of so-and-so from amongst the people, for this is information that could be true or false. There is no evidence of its veracity, just as there are amongst people those who are wicked and have a habit of lying and playing with people's minds, and the same is true amongst the jinn. How do you know that the one speaking to you or writing down answers to your questions from the bottom of the basket is not a rebellious devil that has come to make you confused about your religion and amuse himself by deceiving you and take pleasure in lying to

That is the idiocy that cannot be embodied is anything more vulgar and more repulsive than this phenomenon.

One of them, in his denial, will boast to you in the name of science and the evidence of science when you place in front of him the scientific evidence in accordance with his accurate, intellectual method. Then you will see him shrinking in humiliation, bowing his head in broken obedience and blind faith when you place in front of him the empty claim of some Western thinker or their orientalists. What knowledge⁽¹⁾ is this that is stirred up in his brain and which he boasts about to you and yet he still has not acquired an independent personality that would make him capable of thinking with his intellect? May Allah have mercy on the Arab who knew the hidden sickness in people like this when he said, 'An anus in water and a head in the sky'⁽²⁾.

* * *

you? Have you not read that most of the causes of stupidity in twisted or mad people who claim that they are Prophets or great people are notions from these devils, since they call into the depths of their hearts or on their eardrums that they are Allah's beloved and His great people...and that Allah has ennobled them by stripping them of any legal responsibility? Maybe the delusion in their jugular veins, their empty heads weighing heavily with deceit and their whole bodies quivering...makes them feel certain that they are Allah's guided ministers on earth and between Him and them are pure spirits who speak to them. However, they are nothing but the wretched spirits of rebellious devils that normally hover around the tops of people's minds and thoughts and take pleasure in misguiding them and playing with them.

There is no doubt in the existence of spirits, but it is not normal for them to be truthful. If one of them says to you that it is the spirit of the one of the Prophets and then, based on that, presents principles and morals to you, then there is no doubt that it is an evil spirit amusing itself by deceiving you!

(1) (tn): or science.

(2) This is an Arab proverb used for those who boast about that which they have no justification to.

Furthermore, we have spoken at length about the scientific proof for the existence of the angels and the jinn, and the position of certain simple-minded people, and others, regarding this proof, because this is the same position that these people hold regarding matters of the unseen, which we will be discussing next. We thought that we would present the subject matter here and apply it (the positive and the negative) to the other discussions that are to follow.

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4. The Law of Causation in the Universe

- A. We must, in order expound this study and arrive at that which must be firmly believed in, expound the following issues:
- B. Clarification of the law of causation in the universe
- C. How does this law of causation agree with what we know about the entire world only being a part of that which is possible?
- D. The wisdom behind subjecting the universe to the law of causation
- E. What a Muslim is obligated to believe based on that

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A. Clarification and analysis of the law of causation in the universe:

Let us begin with the first of these issues, which is clarification and analysis of the law of causation in the universe. We say:

It is known to everyone, by necessity, that there is no single thing that does not need something else. There is no human being except that he conceives of his need, and the need of those like him, for certain matters and lack of his need for certain other matters.

That which is needed for the existence of something is called an *'illah* or a *sabab*⁽¹⁾ and the thing in need is called a *ma'lūl*⁽²⁾ or a *musabbab*.⁽³⁾

If this has been made clear to you then you know that there is no single thing except that it is caused by something like it from one side and it is the cause of something else from another side. Examples of this include the propagation and multiplication of humanity,

(1) (tn): i.e. a cause.

(2) (tn): i.e. an effect.

(3) (tn): i.e. something caused.

the differing times and seasons and the means of tilling, building and planting. Indeed, an example of this would be the ways people live and how they differ in terms of inclination, skills, abilities and propensities.

However, the number of obvious causes in front of you decreases every time contemplate deeply and examine the depths of these same causes, just as the branches of a tree in front of you decrease in number as your lower your gaze towards its trunk. This continues until all the various causes come together in one, main cause, and it is the necessary cause, or that which exists by necessity, and it is Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and this matter has already been elucidated for you.

We call this phenomenon that we perceive in existence, and which we cannot possibly deny, the law of causation in the universe.

B. How does this law of causation agree with what we know about the entire world only being a part of that which is possible?

First of all, the difficulty must be conceived. We say: it is known that something cannot be called a cause of something else unless it influences or, either by bringing it into existence, taking it out of existence or modifying it. This influencing must be unalterable as long as the influencer is a cause, as we are saying. Otherwise, it would cease to be such, and there would be contradiction with what we have clarified regarding the law of causation in the universe being by necessity, which the senses admit to.

If that were the case then we would have to state that this universe—or most of its manifestations, at least—exists necessarily, and its course in the form in which we see it is also necessary and imperative, on account of it being the outcome of various specific causes the existence of which would be established based on sense and observation.

This contradicts what was established for you before, which is that everything in existence falls under the category of that which is possible, and presuming its non-existence or the non-existence of some of it would not result in anything rationally impossible or forbidden.

The answer is that the matter would indeed be problematic if we were to say that the causes spread out in the universe are actual causes, i.e. they have intrinsic influence without needing someone to establish that influence in them. However, we do not say this, as it is self-evidently impossible for these causes to have intrinsic influence when we know that they bear the attribute of temporality after being non-existent. How can the influence they contain originate from their own essence when this essence itself was non-existent at one point in time and then acquired existence by the influence of another cause? The same can be said of this other cause and of all the other various causes.

Therefore, what is the meaning of these matters beings causes? The meaning of that is confined within Allah, Mighty and Majestic, making a link between them and other matters entirely out of His will and power only. Thus, the continuation of this link has appeared in front of us as the phenomenon of causation and influence, and we have come to use both of these words metaphorically. You know that a lengthy connection between two matters in existence and non-existence can make the mind imagine that there is a causal link between them, even if there is actually no decisive link.

This meaning is made clear to you in what psychologists call conditioned response.⁽¹⁾ By means of experimentation, these people have established that if the existence of any influencer, from the various influencers upon the psyche, is repeatedly shown to occur along with some other matter, even if it is merely coincidental, the

(1) (tn): This is also known as classical conditioning or respondent conditioning.

psyche will see that other matter as acquiring something of the force of that influencer. Thus, it does what it does and its consequence is actualised, or something close to it. The example they give is the experiments that were carried out by Pavlov⁽¹⁾ in which he presented food to a group of hungry dogs while at the same ringing a specific bell over their ears, and he repeated this over a consecutive number of days. Each time, the effect of seeing food was that their mouths would salivate. Then, after that, he rang the bell by itself without presenting food and the same effect was produced that had been produced at the sight of food.

The explanation of this with regards to what we are discussing is that when the dogs saw the connection between the sound of the bell and the appearance of food in front of them, and this connection continued in front of them for a period of time, this link became firmly established in their imaginations and had a specific effect on their psyches. If we were to say that the dogs had intellect, to the extent that they were capable of thought, we would say that due to the prolonged continuation of this connection, the dogs came to think that the bell was the influencing cause that made the food appear and be present in front of them.

The story of man faced with this existence is no different from the story of these dogs faced with the bell and the food. Allah the Exalted's will has been attached to the fact that the plants of the earth

(1) A Russian scientist whom foreign psychologists say is the first person to discover the theory of conditioned response, and their slaves from amongst the Arabs submit to what they say and believe in it instinctively. Thus, you see them exaggerating in their praise of Pavlov and claiming that he is the first to discover this theory, even though the theory is found in the clearest elucidation possible in the books *al-Mustasfā* and *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* by al-Ghazālī, may Allah have mercy on him, and in the simplest, humble terms, they show that the theory is not something that insightful scholar is incapable of knowing. (See *al-Mustasfā* (1/57) and *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, p.235).

do not appear unless rain has fallen from the clouds. His will has been attached the fact that drops of rain do not fall unless the clouds become compressed and condensed to a certain amount within a certain degree of humidity. His will has been attached to the fact that human beings do not reproduce unless they come together, and so forth. If Allah, Mighty and Majestic, had wanted, He could have separated these matters, cut the connections between them and left each one on its own to follow its own course, showing each to be independent of the other.

Therefore, what we call the law of causation in the universe is not its name in reality. Rather, it is the law of mere correlation. We have called it this because it appears to us as causation and that is how it has become firmly established in our minds.

However, this naming does not agree with the realities of science and the facts of the matter, as you have seen. This is why scientists have given these universal causes the name 'apparent causes',⁽¹⁾ i.e. they are matters that Allah has made causes merely through correlation. Thus, they are made to appear as causes and they are not essential, influencing causes. What you may notice therein in terms of manifestations of influence and causality is not actually the case. It is correlation and nothing else.

However, Imam al-Ghazālī, may Allah have mercy on him, did not see a contradiction between the universal causes be apparent, as we have said, and the containing some influence that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, places in them and removes from them whenever he wants. He views this as the truth. In other words, the issue is not one of mere correlation, like the correlation of the bell and the food, but rather there is an influence concealed within the related cause. However, it is not an influence that emanates from its essence but

(1) (tn): or 'made causes'.

rather Allah, Mighty and Majestic, places it therein⁽¹⁾.

This analysis of al-Ghazālī is closer to being in harmony with the scientific justifications for the phenomena of things and their structures but it is further from the way of the majority and what has been agreed upon.

We think that this difference of opinion, after some short phases of investigation, ends up at agreement, and thus it is only a difference in expression since what is meant is that the influence of universal causes is not a definitive influence. Rather, it is by Allah's will, Mighty and Majestic is He, for they are matters that actually have no connection to other matters. However, Allah has made them causes, regardless of whether we say that an influencing force has been placed inside them or that this force has not been placed inside them.

D. The wisdom behind subjecting the universe to the law of causation:

The question that must be brought up here is: if these causes are apparent, as I have said, then why has Allah made them as such. Why did He not separate between these gathered matters and distance them from one another so that people would not be misled into thinking that they are influencing causes when that is not the case?

The answer is that one of the most prominent phenomena in this universe that indicates the existence of the Creator, Mighty and Majestic, is the phenomenon of balance and harmony therein, as we clarified beforehand. The meaning of balance and harmony therein is nothing other than the phenomenon of prevalent and effective causation and causality in all of its forms and parts.

(1) *Al-Mustasfā* (2/93), but in his book *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* he inclines towards the position that the connection between two things is inevitably nothing more than a correlation, and that people only imagine that there is some influence because of the prolonged association and understanding of things as such.

Therefore, in order for the universe to brilliantly indicate the existence of the Creator, Mighty and Majestic, it should be well-ordered and in harmony.

In order to achieve this balance and harmony, its parts must be organised such that this part is in need and this part is needed, and thus they come together according to this need that is between them. If this harmony in the universe is made clear to you, you become aware of what we said before regarding the necessity of fewer and fewer causes in issues that are harmonious whenever you look more closely. Whenever you investigate further into these causes and things caused, you start contemplating in this way, until eventually these several various causes take you to the one great cause that is concealed behind everything you have seen, i.e. the One Who exists by necessity, and He is Allah, Mighty and Majestic is He.

Indeed the one who contemplates specific and dispersed apparatuses and tools cannot possibly believe that they were all made by one person who brought them into existence unless he sees them complementing one another and co-operating within a structure in order to bring about a certain, peculiar function. Whenever he looks more closely at this harmony and further examines its intricacies, he becomes more certain of the unity of its maker, and that is because it is as if he deliberately put the parts together in their correct and conceivable structure, and therefore in his hands they were transformed into a clock that tells time and therefore it is from the making of a known, specific operator.

And this is how Allah's mercy towards His slaves required that He make His universe them most eloquent elucidation articulating the divinity of Allah alone and that He is the Creator and Originator of the entire universe. He then put you in constant need of several specific matters. Then He placed between you and these matters links of intermediaries and means. Whenever one of them crosses

over to the other, a new meaning of the harmony between the parts and particulars of the universe becomes clear to you and you become aware of the co-operation collaboration that exists between the in order to realise your objectives and needs, until you eventually become certain that behind this entire universe there is someone carrying out this planning and this composing.

If Allah had created you without the need for anything, and created everything else likewise—and He is able to do so—there would be no opportunity in front of you to discover the meaning of balance and harmony therein, and you would lose the most prominent phenomenon in the universe that indicates Allah the Exalted's existence.

Then, when Allah's wisdom and mercy towards His slaves, Glorified and Exalted is He, required this, and man lived a life in which he became accustomed to intermediaries and means, his imagination became incapable of conceiving matters unless they were dependent on preliminaries and intermediaries. His wisdom, may His majesty be manifest, also required that unseen events also be based on the system of means and causes, so that man can conceive them according to what he is used to and what his mind and imagination are accustomed to. Thus, Allah has informed him that He is monitoring all of his actions and conduct in this world, and He has made it clear to him that this is achieved by means of two angels who monitor him and calculate everything he does and does not do. He has informed him that whoever's good deeds outweigh his bad deeds will be among the successful on the Day of Standing, and He has made it clear to him that this will be unveiled by means of a scale on which deeds will be weighed. He has informed him of the Fire and that there are angels watching over it and punishing the disbelievers therein, and that there are angels bearing the Throne, angels guarding man and an angel that takes people's souls.

It is known self-evidently that Allah, Mighty and Majestic—and He is the One Who created these angels and rendered them this ability—does not need them to be His intermediaries and means, not at all, but Allah, Mighty and Majestic, wanted to manifest His authority and His power to His slaves in the way that they have become used to in their lives and that their imaginations and minds have become accustomed to. Perhaps the closest example of this is what has come in His Unequivocal Exposition, may His majesty be manifest, where it is mentioned that He, Glorified and Exalted, on the Day of Standing, seals the mouths of the disbelievers and commands their hands and feet to testify to what they perpetrated, and that is in His statement, may His majesty be manifest: **“Today we seal up their mouths and their hands speak to us, and their feet bear witness to what they earned”** [Yā Sīn 36:65]. What is the value of the hands and the feet testifying for the person, or against him, when it is established that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is cognizant of everything that is within him? The value of that is confined within this testimony that makes it clear that when he is standing there he will not be able to use any of the mediation, artful means and disguises that he was used to in this world. It would be easy for Allah, may His majesty be manifest, to nullify all of that. If you utter false testimony before Him, may His majesty be manifest, He will make one of your limbs speak and it will disclose the false testimony of your tongue. Allah’s divinity and the sublimity of His authority is more clearly manifested in this than in Him saying, for example, ‘Today, nothing that you used to do is hidden from us and we will take you to account for all of it.

E. What a Muslim is obligated to believe based on that:

This is the last issue, and it is the fruit of everything we have mentioned in the first three issues.

A Muslim is obligated to have firm conviction that there is no influence in the universe for anything apart from Allah, Mighty

and Majestic, that all the manifestations of means and causes that appear before us are only made⁽¹⁾ means and cause, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, made them like that, and that what the researcher may find therein in terms of factors and influences and so forth is only like that in the outward sense. Knowledge has nothing to do with things other than to describe them as they are in their most subtle manifestations and then apply this description through experience in repeated domains. If knowledge only describes the actual situation and nothing more, then this actual situation is nothing more than perpetual correlation. As for the possibility of it being interrupted, that is something else. How preposterous it would be for knowledge to arrive at the conclusion that the correlation between causes and things caused is a definitive matter thus the two can never be detached or separated.

Since indisputable proof has established what we have said, denying it is disbelief according to the consensus of the Muslims. Affirming the divinity of Allah has no meaning if one denies this, as is known, and likewise there would no meaning to having faith in any of the miracles and suspensions of the norm that Allah ennobled His Prophets and Messengers with, such as the fire becoming cool and peaceful and cool for Ibrāhīm, blessings and peace be upon him, or curing the blind and the leper and bringing the dead back to life. All of this has been explicitly stated and unequivocally expressed in the Qur’ān.

The aggregate of everything we have mentioned is in the Exalted’s statement: “His command when He desires a thing is just to say to it, ‘Be!’ and it is”⁽²⁾.

(1) (tn): or apparent.

(2) (tn): Sūrat Yā Sīn 36:82.

There is no objection to using expressions that indicate causality between things if one's theology is sound:

Perhaps after this you will ask about the ruling for a Muslim using expressions that indicate causation and influence between things, and this is because of prolonged familiarity and the fact that things appear to have essential, influencing causes. An example would be someone saying, 'the medicine benefitted me' or 'the doctor cured me' or 'the crop ripened due to lots of rain, or a Muslim using the Prophets as a means⁽¹⁾ or using their relics and remnants as a means of obtaining blessings⁽²⁾.

The answer is that if it accompanied by the belief that one of these things has influence, it is disbelief by consensus, as we clarified before. If it is accompanied by the belief that the influencer therein is only Allah, may His majesty be manifest, there is no objection, because this expression of his only corresponds to the outward that this universe is based upon, which is the law of made causation.

Even more so, there is no objection to using the Messengers and Prophets as a means:

If there is no objection and no harm in using such expressions with regards to medicine, doctors and rain, then even more so there should be no objection with regards to Prophets, such as in *tawassul* and *tabarruk*, and indeed it is more appropriate. This is because Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has made his Prophet Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, a mercy to all the worlds, and He made this clear in his unequivocal Book when He said, **"We have only sent you as a mercy to all the worlds"** [al-Anbiyā' 21:107]. Thus, Allah has made him a cause of mercy for His slaves, so what objection can there be in a Muslim seeking as a means that which

(1) Ar. *tawassul*.

(2) Ar. *tabarruk*.

Allah has honoured him with in this way and made him a mercy for all creation?

All of the Companions were filled with awareness of this meaning, and thus they spared no effort in *tawassul* and seeking blessings from his relics and remnants on several different occasions, and this is has been affirmed by ḥadīths that are established and authentic and are not tainted by any doubt or misgiving.

What is amazing is that certain people continue to attribute matters to their apparent causes. Indeed, they use expressions that would clearly indicate that the apparent cause is actually that which produced the effect, such as attributing a cure to medicine, or asking a physician for it. Then you see these same people paying very close attention to the words of others and whenever they hear the words *tawassul* or *tabarruk* of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from anyone, they declare them guilty of idolatry⁽¹⁾ and disbelief, even though this individual did not attribute the production of the effect to him, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and did not say anything more about the Messenger than what they say about physicians and medicines. Is the causation of medicine with regards to a cure greater than the causation of our master Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with regards to blessings and mercy?! What we say is that there is no actual causation in this or that, but it is preposterous to elevate this apparent causation in medicine and medication to even one-tenth of the degree to which the apparent causation in Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is raised with regards to mercy, forgiveness and blessings.

What is also amazing, and which boggles the mind, is to see them saying, 'The Companions only did *tawassul* of him because he was still alive...after his passing, *tawassul* was nullified and its ruling was abolished, and it became idolatry and disbelief'!!!

(1) Ar. *shirk*

Can anyone say this unless they think that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, assumed, while he was alive and had physical capacity, the means of producing an effect for those who did *tawassul* and *tabarruk* of him, and then when he died the means of producing an effect disappeared and therefore *tawassul* of him became *tawassul* of something that cannot produce an effect?! This is nothing but pure disbelief, and it is worse than what these people pretend they are fleeing from.

Indeed the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, cannot produce an effect in anything whatsoever, not in his lifetime nor after his death. Whoever believes otherwise is a disbeliever in Allah and His Messenger. As for the anchor of *tawassul* and *tabarruk* of him, it is nothing but an honouring from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, that is bestowed upon him, and He has made him a means of mercy for His slaves. This honouring and ennoblement was not detached from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, upon him passing away. Rather, it was increased, as we know, in sublimity and nobility.

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The summary of all this is that a Muslim must know that the causer of all causes is only Allah, Mighty and Majestic, for they are all artificial causes that have no intrinsic value. If, after that, one uses expressions that correspond to this perceived system of the universe, in that it is based on causation and causality, while at the same time being certain that Allah alone is the causer, there is no objection to it.

Tawassul of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, comes under this generality, but it distinguished from using other universal phenomena as a means by the fact that it is also a means of drawing nearer to Allah, as it is emulating the actions of the Companions from one angle and it is exaltation of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from the other.

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This is the sum total of what one must have firm conviction of with regards to the affairs of the universe and its phenomena, and we have clarified the scientific proofs that are attached to it.

Perhaps you have learned during our discussion that Allah's wisdom, Mighty and Majestic is He, required that man be the master of this universe,⁽¹⁾ that the various phenomena of the universe that surround him have been subjugated to serve him and have been set in motion to realise his interests, and that due to his intellect—and it is the holy reality that has not been granted to anything else—he is able to spread his authority over a great number of the universe's affairs and conduct himself therein according to his will. The Creator's speech, may His majesty be manifest, made this fact clear in a way that leaves no confusion and no secrecy: **"Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you everything in the heavens and earth and showered His blessings upon you, both outwardly and inwardly? Yet there are people who argue about Allah without knowledge or guidance or any illuminating Book"** [Luqmān 32:20].

If you have comprehended this reality, then know that there is no religious danger, as some ignorant people imagine, in man increasing, through reflection and contemplation, in knowledge of many of these different realities of the universe around him, whether they are near or far. Likewise, there is no religious objection, after that, to him arriving at the discovery of these facts through sensory perception and observation, such as traversing the layers of the atmosphere and discovering celestial bodies, whether from nearby or at a distance. Likewise, there is no objection to a Muslim giving credence to the news of any of these things taking place.

¹ By man we mean his reality and his essence, without looking into individuals, for if we meant the species and every individual then what we are saying would not be true, as is obvious.

This is because all of this comes under the meaning of subjugation⁽¹⁾ that the Qur'ān has expressed. Indeed, this word clearly articulates that man is able, if he uses his entire intellect and thought, to examine the depths of many of the universe's realities and be guided to them through reflection, observation and perception. If not, then the word 'subjugation' is not being used according to its reality and does not comprise its full meaning.

If you are astonished, then astonishment should be for the slaves of the east and the west when you see them saying unabashedly—and they have sunk into the soil of laziness, amusement and indolence—that the space age has abrogated religion, and that scientific progress has unveiled the myths of old...they say this in a state of intoxication that shakes their bodies, as if they are the one who invade space and float around the stars; or it is as if this noise will create wings on the sides of each one of them which will uproot them from the soil of meekness and indolence to the highest heavens, or to where the stars and celestial bodies roam! Or it is as if they have discovered Allah's entire kingdom and thus they are certain that there is no creator and no god!

By my life, there is no one more contemptible than someone ignorant of everything other than someone whose paltry knowledge intoxicates him with regards to his abundant ignorance, and there is no one more contemptible than either of these two than someone who boasts about someone else's knowledge and a lazy person who prides himself upon someone else's efforts.

You should know, my intelligent brother, that this universe, in its various intricacies, is only hidden from us by the veils of our own eyelids. Thus, anyone who awakens his intellect to reflection and knowledge and patience with travelling its journey will be able to

(1) (tn): or subjection.

remove this veil from himself. The believer and the disbeliever, the righteous and the sinful are all equal in this, as long as Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has distributed the essentials of humanity amongst them equally and granted all of them intellect and thought.

If there is a difference, then it is that the believer is called by the motive of faith, which is exclusive to him—in addition to the motive of loving to seek and discover, which all sane people share—to attain the realities of the universe and lift its veil, and he continues to be pushed to do so whenever he reads His words, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"Say: 'Look at what there is in the heavens and on earth'"** [Yūnus 10:101], and there are many verses like this in the Qur'ān. He should not do so for the sake of dishonourable competition in the field of empty propaganda, competing to spread influence or establishing the means of tyranny, but rather to subjugate what he is able to subjugate therein on the path to realising more of the essentials of general human happiness under the shade of absolute slavehood to the Creator, Mighty and Majestic.

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Introduction

What is meant by matters of the unseen?

It is a subject which is not only of great importance to the human mind, but also of great importance to the human heart. It is a subject which is not only of great importance to the human mind, but also of great importance to the human heart.

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Part Four: Matters of the Unseen

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Introduction

What is meant by matters of the unseen?

In a succinct, comprehensive word, we say: what is meant by unseen matters here is everything that has no means of being believed in except by means of indisputable reports⁽¹⁾.

Based on that, none of the realities that we have presented and discussed in the first three parts come under 'unseen matters', because knowing Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, is more easily accomplished by way of reflection and rationality than it is by way of indisputable reports. Faith in the Prophethood of the Prophets and what they have been sent with is also easily accomplished by way of reflection and rationality. The realities that we presented in the discussion on the universals fall under the same judgment of the intellect that applies to the chapters on divinity and Prophethood, and they are attached to things that are created and present, not just ordinary matters.

However, there are other matters that have not reached us except by way of indisputable reports, and their contents have not yet been realised such that that would be evidence of the veracity of the report concerning it. Rather, they continue to be veiled from us. They have no existence except in the knowledge of Allah, may His majesty be manifest. This includes the indisputable reports that mention the signs of the Hour and the events that a person experiences after death. They include the indisputable reports that talk about the establishment of the Hour, the gathering of the bodies with their

(1) As for what is meant by the unseen in the Qur'ān, it is everything that the senses have no access to, and because of that the unseen there includes faith in Allah the Exalted's existence and faith in the angels and the jinn.

spirits, the Reckoning⁽¹⁾, the Scale⁽²⁾, the Bridge⁽³⁾, the Paradise and the Fire. These are matters that if there were no indisputable reports informing of their occurrence, the intellect would have no means of conceiving them and believing in them. Despite that, when there is a report that mentions them, it does not make the intellect capable of perceiving them or imagining any image of them, because they have not yet been brought into existence and man has not come across any specimen or example of them such that he could conceive the matter by way of analogy. It is on account of this that these matters have been given the name 'unseen matters' or 'transcendental matters'.

How is the scientific method applied in understanding unseen matters and being firmly convinced of them?

Now, before we delve into presenting these unseen matters and elucidating the necessity to have firm conviction in them, we must ask: If this is the quality and nature of unseen matters, how can we set down a path based on the scientific method that is accepted by science and the intellect by which we can arrive at firm conviction in these unseen matters?

First of all, we present to you these analogous examples, and you will find the answer to this question embodied within them.

1. The doctor says to you—and you are holding a glass of water in your hand and considering drinking it—that this water is contaminated and whoever drinks it will expose his life to certain danger. He says these words to you and you do not know a thing about medicine and the components and natures of things. All you know is that the one saying these words to you is a proficient and truthful doctor.

(1) Ar. *al-ḥisāb*.

(2) Ar. *al-mīzān*.

(3) Ar. *al-ṣirāt*.

2. It reaches you that the meteorologists and astronomers of the world have informed that there will be a lunar eclipse, on a specific night after a certain number of days. You look into the matter and become certain that this is not just some rumour. Rather, it is an official report that has been transmitted indisputably from authoritative sources.
3. You hear from official, reliable sources that functionaries at the electric firm are going to shut off the electric grid, at a specific hour on a specific night.

There is no doubt that in the first example you will be certain of the danger of drinking that water and you will refrain from consuming any of it. In the second example, you will be certain that a lunar eclipse will take place at the time that the people in the authority have specified. Likewise, you will be certain that the electric grid will be cut off at the aforementioned, specific time, and you will prepare accordingly.

Why are you certain of these matters and what is the scientific proof that you have subjugated your intellect to affirming?

The answer is that your intellect is compelled to affirm this based on two proofs:

The first is your certainty that the doctor is skilful and truthful and that medicine is a scientific, established reality. There is also your certainty that the meteorologists and astronomers would not be unaware of variations in the weather and solar and lunar eclipses if they have examined the matter closely and know what is constant regarding the norms of the universe and its system that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has established it upon. There is also your certainty that the regulation of electricity in the area is dependent on a specific firm that has been entrusted with all of its affairs.

The second is your certainty that what has reached you, in terms of the doctor's words, the words of the meteorologists and astronomers

or the announcement of the electric firm, is an indisputable report that has been transmitted to you by an official agency in a way that cannot possibly be interpreted or be a lie.

Thus, establishing the first proof and then building the second proof on it, results undoubtedly in you being certain of these three reports, even if their contents have not yet been realised and even if, on account of that, we call them unseen matters.

No one doubts that the criminal law of a country is a scientific, established fact to which reality is subjected.

Were it not for one relying on these two proofs, it would not be possible for this to be the case. It would not be valid for anybody to give it any unseen consideration and thus imagine that one would receive any form of punishment if one perpetrated any of their causes, let alone affirm it and be certain of it!

However, whenever men are certain, from the very beginning, in the power of the state and the implementation of its authority and command, then it reaches them via an indisputable path that cannot be doubted what this state has taken upon itself toward anyone who perpetrates any of these crimes and felonies—they must by necessity be certain that these punishments will be applied when it is ascertained that their causes have taken place. As for someone who stops and says to you, 'But I do not believe except in that which has been established by experience and observation and I have sensed it being represented in front of me'—there is nothing you can do apart from having compassion for his way of thinking. Or you can show him the path of tangible, experiential proof and what it leads to, for he will see the experience of having a noose tightened around his neck. Then, at that point, the experience will only be felt by a motionless corpse.

* * *

After presenting these clear realities than no sane person can doubt, we say:

There is no doubt that it would be ridiculously frivolous of us to address someone who does not believe in Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, with any of these unseen realities, or someone who still has not affirmed the sending of Messengers and Prophets and that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech. This is because it would be the same if you were to address someone who does not yet understand the meaning of the state with any of the articles of the criminal law, or does not believe that there is anyone responsible for these words. The same would apply if you were to talk about lunar eclipses with someone who does not yet believe in something called meteorology or something called astronomy. Indeed, it would be frivolous to talk to him about this as he has no capacity to understand it and be certain of it.

Rather, we refer deniers like this back to the words that we have already mentioned in the section on divinity and we interrogate them regarding the self-evident realities that we presented therein. Then we move him on to what we clarified in the section on Prophethood and we interrogate him regarding the proofs that we presented in that regard, such that when he believes in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, then believes in the Messengers and Prophets and that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech—he will naturally end up, and by necessity of rational examination, believing in all unseen realities. Nothing will make him hesitate to accept them and affirm them apart from ascertaining that the reports are decisive and that they fulfil all the well-known, scientific conditions for indisputable reports.

As for finding someone who believes in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and believes in His Messengers and His Books and despite that he denies one unseen sureties that are established in Allah's Book, Mighty and Majestic is He—this cannot possibly happen. No

one denies any of these unless it is because they have not yet believed in the former sublime realities, even if they make people imagine or make themselves imagine that they do believe in them.

If this has been made clear to you, we can begin presenting the unseen realities that the intellect must affirm and be certain of after becoming certain of the realities that we have finished elucidating. We will not prolong our discussion by mentioning the evidences for each one of them, as we have done with what has already preceded, because their evidence are merely the transmission of truthful, indisputable reports from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, regarding them. Thus, when we look we find that the transmitted report is a report whose chain of transmission is connected from beginning to end and it contains no irregularities or defects. We find that is also has several paths, so much so that it reaches the level of mass-transmitted. Thus, the intellect cannot avoid affirming them and placing them under that which he is firmly convinced of and certain of. These realities are concentrated in the following three matters:

1. Realities connected to death.
2. The signs of the Hour.
3. The Day of Standing and its events.

* * *

1. Realities Connected to Death

As for death, everyone knows that it is a witnessed, tangible reality, and is nothing to do with unseen matters.

It is the story of the greatest reality in this existence! It is the reality at which falls the tyranny of the tyrants, the stubbornness of the heretics and the oppression of the oppressors and those who deify themselves! It is the reality that places the cover of termination and annihilation over this entire vast existence. All of human life is dyed with the dye of slavehood and humility before the Dominator of the heavens and the earth. Voluntarily or involuntarily, it is a reality that the disobedient and the obedient shall be wrapped in, the leaders and those who deify themselves, the Messengers and the Prophets, those who draw near to Allah and the pure, the rich and the poor and the masters of science and invention.

It is the reality that declares throughout time and space, in the ears of everyone who can hear and in the intellects of everyone who thinks, that there is no divinity except for the One Who He alone possesses everlastingness. He is the One Whose decree is never repelled and Whose authority has no limits. There is no escape from His rule and nothing overcomes His command⁽¹⁾.

This reality is a matter that is witnessed and tangible, as we have said, and it has nothing to do with unseen matters.

However, there are other matters that surround it from in front of it and from behind it. Science has no scope for them except by way of indisputable reports that have been transmitted regarding them, as they have not been disclosed in terms of sensory perception and eye-witnessing except for the person who is dying and has started

(1) From p. 498 of the author's book *Fiqh al-Sīrah* (2nd edition) (tn): p.590-591 of the English translation.

suffering its pangs and the person who has passed that and entered the life of the *barzakh*⁽¹⁾, which is established after death. This is why these matters are unseen from our perspective as long as we are moving across the traverse of this life and we have not yet arrived at the conclusion that is the final outcome of every living thing.

These unseen matters are:

A. The Angel of Death

B. The questioning of the grave

C. The punishment of the grave and its blessings

* * *

A. The Angel of Death and the taking of people's spirits:

There is no doubt that the One Who causes life and causes death is Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and He is the One Who takes back people's souls and causes them to die when He wants. In elucidating this, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says, **"Allah takes back people's souls when their death arrives"** [al-Zumar 39:42].

However, Allah's wisdom, Mighty and Majestic is He, required that He entrust the taking of people's spirits to one of His angels who draw near to Him, just as His wisdom required that He entrust the existence of various created beings to apparent causes that He linked together purely out of His will. This is indicated by the indisputable report that allows no probability, and it is Allah the Exalted's statement:

"Say: 'The Angel of Death, who has been given charge of you, will take you back and then you will be sent back to your Lord'" [al-Sajdah 32:11].

He is the sublime angel whom Allah has called, as you have seen, the Angel of Death, and it has been mentioned in some traditions

(1) (tn): i.e. the life that takes place from one's death until they are resurrected.

that his name is 'Izrā'il, i.e. the slave of the Compeller⁽¹⁾, and he has become well-known by this name. Mujāhid said in describing him, 'The earth is folded up for him and thus it is made like a large metal basin from which he can take whenever he wants.' Ibn Kathīr said, 'Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad related it from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, *mursalan*⁽²⁾, and Ibn 'Abbās also said it'⁽³⁾.

However, does He have helpers from amongst the angels who apply themselves to removing the spirits from their bodies, or is the entire matter entrusted to him alone?

The answer is that this issue falls within the scope of personal reasoning and examination, and the position that the majority have gone with is that the Angel of Death has several helpers from amongst the angels whom Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has established with him in this matter. The evidence for this is the Exalted's statement: **"The angels ask those who they take while they are wronging themselves, 'What were your circumstances?'"** [al-Nisā' 4:97] and the rest of the verse. There is also the Exalted's statement, **"Then when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail in their task"** [al-An'ām 6:61]. The meaning is that Allah the Exalted created the Angel of Death and placed at his hands the taking of people's spirits and removing and extracting them from their bodies. Allah the Exalted created soldiers to be with him and carry out his work by his command. Thus, the Angel of Death takes and the angels apply themselves, and Allah the Exalted suppresses the spirit⁽⁴⁾.

(1) Ar. 'abd ul-Jabbār.

(2) (tn): i.e. in the chain of transmission someone is missing after the level of Follower (*tābi*).

(3) See *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*: (3/485) (tn): i.e. his commentary on the abovementioned verse.

(4) See *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* (14/94).

Then the various ḥadīths and traditions indicate that whenever a person is in the most pious state during his life, the Angel of Death is gentler with him and death is made easier for him. Whenever a person penetrates deeply into evil and disobedience during his life, the Angel of Death is harsher towards him and death is more severe for him, even though this is not always the case.

These are the first of the unseen realities connected to death, and a Muslim must be firmly and decisively convinced of them due to the indisputable reports that have been transmitted regarding them.

B. The questioning of the grave:

When a person dies, Allah sends two angels to him in a frightful and terrifying form. They ask him about the religion that he lived upon and his knowledge of this man that he heard about, and he is Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him. Whomever Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has made firm with the firm word and dies upon the truth and with the best end⁽¹⁾, Allah inspires him to answer the angels' questions without being afflicted in any way by their frightful appearance. Whoever does not hold fast to the rope of faith in his worldly life and dies upon the amusement, disobedience and turning away from the truth that he lived upon, Allah fills his heart with fear of them and thus the desired answer is absent from his thinking and he does not reply to what they say.

These are from the unseen realities that are only experienced by those who have ended up at that outcome, and all of us are on the brink of ending up at it. This has been indicated by numerous authentic ḥadīths that collectively surpass the required limit to be considered mass-transmitted. This is why all Muslims have made consensus to have faith in them in accordance with what the indisputable proofs indicate.

(1) (tn): i.e. while engaged in righteousness.

One of the ḥadīths that has been transmitted is what has been related by al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others in which the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, led the people in the eclipse prayer one time, then stood up, praised Allah and said, {There is nothing that I have not seen except that I have seen it in this place where I am standing, even Paradise and the Fire, and it has been revealed to me that you will be tested in your graves in a way that is similar or close to the tribulation of the Dajjāl. One of you will be approached and it will be said to him, 'What is your knowledge of this man?' As for the believer or the one who has certainty—this is hesitation on the part of those who narrated the ḥadīth—he says, 'He is Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah. He came to us with clear signs and guidance, so we responded, we believed and we followed.' It is then said to him, 'Sleep well. We knew that you were a believer.' As for the hypocrite or the one who has doubt (again, doubt on the part of the narrator), he will say, 'I do not know. I heard the people saying something so I said it' }.

There is also what has been related by the two Shaykhs⁽¹⁾ with their own chain of transmission in which that Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {When the slave has been placed in his grave, and his companions have turned away from him, he hears their footsteps. Then two angels come to him, sit him up and say to him, 'What did you used to say about this man?' } He then said, {As for the believer, he says, 'I bear witness that he is the slave of Allah and His Messenger', and it will be said to him, 'Look at your seat in the Fire. Allah has replaced it with a seat for you in Paradise' }. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then said, {Thus, he sees both of them. As for the hypocrite and the disbeliever, it is said to him, 'What did you say about this man?' He replies, 'I do not know. I said what the people said.' It is thus said to him, 'You did not

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(1) (tn): i.e. al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

know and you did not follow', and he is struck with an iron hammer and he lets out a scream that is heard by everyone near him apart from humans and the jinn⁽¹⁾.

There is also what has been narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as others, with their own chain of transmission on the authority of al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib in which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {When the Muslim has been placed in his grave and he testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, that is His statement, may His majesty be manifest: "Allah makes those who believe firm with the Firm Word"⁽²⁾.

And there are several ḥadīths that have been narrated via various paths on the authority of 'Alī, Zayd ibn Thābit, Ibn 'Abbās, al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib, Abū Ayūb, Anas, Jābir, 'Ā'ishah and Abū Sa'īd, and all of them are regarding the questioning of the grave and its trial.

Thus, this is the mass-transmitted evidence that does not allow for any doubt or probability.

Furthermore, the attribution of the questioning to the grave is based on what happens to the majority of people, as most people who die are buried in graves. Thus, for them, the questioning of the two angels is in the grave after their companions have turned away and left, as the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, has said. Thus, the attribution of the questioning to the grave is based on what happens to the majority of people. If not, then there is no doubt that it is something established for everyone who dies, regardless of whether they are buried in a grave, drown at sea, are eaten by a predator or are consumed by a fire.

You might ask, 'But how will the questioning and answering take place if someone dies in one of those ways?'

(1) Ar. *al-thaqalayn*.

(2) (tn): Sūrat Ibrāhīm 14:27.

The answer is that the matter falls within the scope of that which is possible and is not something that is impossible. The upshot of the matter is that that which is possible include matters that we do not witness and are not accustomed to conceiving and digesting how they are and it also includes that which is subjected to observation and ongoing sight. Thus, at first sight, man imagines that the former is impossible and the latter alone is possible.

It is not difficult for Allah, may His majesty be manifest, to return life once again to the atoms of the body, regardless of whether they are gathered in a grave, scattered in open country or broken up in the belly of a predator, such that it is aware of the questioning and the answers and can see the angel that is asking him and talking to him. This is because the realities of what comes after death are connected to a system that is completely different to the system of this world that is visible to the living. In elucidating this issue, we quote to you what Imam al-Ghazālī has said, may Allah have mercy on him:

'Indeed this eye is not fit to witness matters of the unseen dominions⁽¹⁾, for everything that is connected to the Hereafter is from the world of the unseen dominions. Have you not seen how the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed in the descent of Jibrīl and they never saw him, and they believed that he, peace be upon him, did see him? If you do not believe in this, then your priority is to rectify the foundation of your faith in angels and revelation. If you believe in that, you will deem it possible for the Prophet to see what his nation does not see, so how can you not deem this possible with regards to the deceased?'

C. The punishment of the grave and its blessings:

These are also from the unseen matters whose evidence has been established by way of indisputable, mass-transmitted reports.

(1) Ar. *al-malakūt*.

know and you did not follow', and he is struck with an iron hammer and he lets out a scream that is heard by everyone near him apart from humans and the jinn⁽¹⁾.

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(2) (tn): Sūrat Ibrāhīm 14:27.

The answer is that the matter falls within the scope of that which is possible and is not something that is impossible. The upshot of the matter is that that which is possible include matters that we do not witness and are not accustomed to conceiving and digesting how they are and it also includes that which is subjected to observation and ongoing sight. Thus, at first sight, man imagines that the former is impossible and the latter alone is possible.

It is not difficult for Allah, may His majesty be manifest, to return life once again to the atoms of the body, regardless of whether they are gathered in a grave, scattered in open country or broken up in the belly of a predator, such that it is aware of the questioning and the answers and can see the angel that is asking him and talking to him. This is because the realities of what comes after death are connected to a system that is completely different to the system of this world that is visible to the living. In elucidating this issue, we quote to you what Imam al-Ghazālī has said, may Allah have mercy on him:

'Indeed this eye is not fit to witness matters of the unseen dominions⁽¹⁾, for everything that is connected to the Hereafter is from the world of the unseen dominions. Have you not seen how the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed in the descent of Jibrīl and they never saw him, and they believed that he, peace be upon him, did see him? If you do not believe in this, then your priority is to rectify the foundation of your faith in angels and revelation. If you believe in that, you will deem it possible for the Prophet to see what his nation does not see, so how can you not deem this possible with regards to the deceased?'

C. The punishment of the grave and its blessings:

These are also from the unseen matters whose evidence has been established by way of indisputable, mass-transmitted reports.

(1) Ar. *al-malakūt*.

We will mention a number of these reports, as they are the pillar for our position regarding unseen matters for which observation and the intellect have no scope for delving into.

1. Allah the Exalted says, **"If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, 'Disgorge your own selves!'"** [al-An'ām 6:93]. There is also the Exalted's statement: **"How will it be when the angels take them in death, beating their faces and their backs?"** [Muḥammad 47:27]. What these two verses indicate does not go against what we are saying, as the verses indicate that the punishment takes place before burial, because nevertheless it is part of the general punishment that takes place before the Day of Standing. We only attribute the punishment to the grave because that is where most of it takes place, as we have already clarified.⁽¹⁾
2. Allah the Exalted says, **"And a most evil torment engulfed Pharaoh's people—the Fire, morning and night, to which they are exposed; and on the Day the Hour takes place: 'Admit Pharaoh's people to the harshest punishment!'"** [Ghāfir 40:45-46]. The part of His statement that contains the evidence is where 'and on the Day the Hour takes place' is conjoined to 'morning and night', and thus we know with certainty that the Fire that is shown to them morning and night is not the Fire that is shown to them on the Day of Standing. There is no doubt that it takes place between death and the resurrection⁽²⁾.
3. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and others, have narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, may Allah be pleased with both of them⁽³⁾, that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, passed

(1) See *Fath al-Bārī* (3/151).

(2) See *al-Mawāqif* and its commentary by al-Ījī, p.42-52.

(3) (tn): i.e. 'Abdullah and his father 'Abbās.

by two graves and said, {Indeed they are both being punished and they are not being punished for something major.} Then he said, {One of them would walk about slandering people and the other would not cover himself⁽¹⁾ from his urine}. Then he took a moist palm-leaf stalk, split it in two and planted a half on each grave. He then said, {Maybe it will be mitigated for them until they dry}.

4. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and others, have narrated from Nāfi' on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {When one of you dies, his seat is shown to him in the morning and in the evening. If he is from the people of Paradise then he is from the people of Paradise. If he is from the people of the Fire then he is from the people of the Fire. It will be said to him, 'This is your seat until Allah resurrects you on the Day of Standing.'} There is no doubt that in this there is a blessing for whoever is from the people of Paradise and a punishment for whoever is from the people of the Fire.

These are some of the texts that are found in the Book and the Sunnah regarding the punishment of the grave and its blessings. Collectively, they surpass the necessary limit to be considered mass-transmitted and thus their contents are decisively evidenced. This is why the Muslims have made consensus that before the deceased are resurrected they are exposed to punishments or blessings according to their state. Likewise, they have made consensus that the Angel of Death takes the spirits and that the two angels ask questions after death.

(1) This is how it is in most narration, with the wording 'cover' (*yastatir*), i.e. he does not place a cover between himself and his urine and thus he does not protect himself from it. In the narration of Muslim and Abū Dāwūd, the word is *yastanzih* [i.e. to remove oneself from] and in the narration of Ibn 'Asākir the word is *yastabri* [to rid oneself of]. The meaning in all of them is the same or close.

If you know this, then we can say:

As for denying the punishment of the grave fundamentally, it is a slide towards disbelief because of the decisive evidence that establishes it, as you know.

As for affirming it fundamentally while having doubts as to whether it is only for the spirit or for the spirit with the body or some parts of the body, is not something that will lead the researcher—whichever of the two positions he adopts—to disbelief, because verifying whether the punishment is only for the spirit or for both the spirit and the body is subject to examination, and there are no clear, decisive evidences on the matter as there for the fundamental matter of punishment and blessings.

However, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and the majority of Muslims have said that it is for both the spirit and the body, as it is something that is possible, as we clarified before. This is also because the outward purports of the texts that have reached us necessitate this without any need for interpretation. It has been established in the authentic ḥadīths that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stood over the well in which the corpses of the idolaters had been thrown and he started talking to them by saying, {We have found what our Lord promised us to be true. Have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?}.

Were it not for his knowledge that the bodies themselves were hearing his words, he would not have directed his address at them, and he would not have said to 'Umar when he was surprised to see him talking to those bodies, {By the One in Whose Hand is Muḥammad's soul, you do not hear what I am saying any better than they do}⁽¹⁾.

Another, smaller group have adopted the position that all of it is for

(1) See what we have mentioned about the deceased's life in the *barzakh* in the commentary on this ḥadīth in the book *Fiqh al-Sīrah*, p.243-44. (tn): See p.287 in the English translation.

the spirit alone. The majority have said, 'They have no evidence that there is any specification and interpretation. Whoever fundamentally believes that the punishment and blessings of the grave are for the spirit only can also believe that both of them are for both the spirit and body. If there is no evidence for specification and interpretation, to adopt them is to adopt a position that has no evidence⁽¹⁾.

The falsity of reincarnation

Before moving on to the study of the second part of matters of the unseen, we draw your attention to that which is necessitated by both of the realities that we have just finished elucidating, and they are the questioning of the two angels and the punishment of the grave. Both of them clearly indicate the falsity of what some people imagine in terms of spirits continuously moving between bodies. Every time the existence of a spirit in its body comes to an end, it moves on to another body, and so on and so forth.

Imagining that spirits are reincarnated in this fashion is one of the fantasies that were prevalent amongst the ancient Greeks, along with the various mythical ideas that spread amongst them which they recognised and which Greek civilisation was known for, just as many of the Pharaohs were known to for having similar fantasies.

However, it is natural for delusions and fancies like this not to wipe out, in every age, weak ideas that dominate them and remain hovering over them. There is no treatment that protects these ideas from the sway of these whisperings other than the treatment of knowledge and true religion, and freedom from the captivity of traditions and cultural inheritances for which—after research—it has been made clear have no roots in scientific reality or even rational reality.

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(1) See *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* (2/401).

We have said that Allah sends two angels to every person after their death. They ask him about his religion that he lived upon and about his knowledge regarding the matter of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him. We said that the deceased is exposed to this either as a type of punishment or as a type of blessings. We clarified the scientific proof in this regard and it is the same scientific proof that is connected to Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, and to the Prophethood of Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and that the miraculous Qur'ān is the speech of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and that the intellect does not need—after it has become certain of all of the above—other than to know a report whose chain of transmission is fully connected back to the Qur'ān or the Sunnah and its number of paths take it beyond the required number for mass-transmission in order to acquire the degree of certainty and decisiveness that satisfies the intellect.

And you have seen mass-transmitted reports from the Book and the Sunnah, judging in affirmation of both the questioning of the grave and its punishment, and thus you can do nothing, after you have believed in everything that is mentioned in the sections on divinity and Prophethood, other than believe in the contents of these mass-transmitted reports.

Then you know with absolute certainty that the questioning and the punishment happen to the spirit of the deceased, as without that no address or blessing or punishment can be conceived, and therefore the spirit is busy with its person, imprisoned for him or against him, as Allah, Mighty and Majestic has said, **"Every soul is held in pledge against what is earned"** [al-Mudaththir 74:38], and it is not possible for it to turn away from him in order to occupy another body in which it will receive a new demeanour and another, unique existence.

It is not possible for any sane person to gather in his mind both belief in reincarnation and belief in what happens after death in terms of the questioning and the punishment, as they clearly contradict one another. There is no doubt that faith in one is a negation of the other.

This is the transmitted evidence from the Book and the Sunnah for the falsity of reincarnation.

As for the rational and scientific evidence, it is to conceive reincarnation as something that is only connected to unseen matters, as is known, and the intellect has no sway over unseen matters as long as there is a barrier between it and them through which no proof can pass through, such as the proofs of experience, witnessing, clear circumstantial evidence or primary analogy based on thorough investigation. Thus, in conceiving unseen matters, the intellect can hold every belief but it will not affirm any belief unless it is based on sound proof. Were it not for mass-transmitted, indisputable proofs that have come from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, or from His Messenger regarding some unseen matters, the position of the intellect regarding them would be the same position, i.e. denial and rejection as long as there is no proof for them. However, when indisputable reports and established the scientific proof for their existence and their affirmation, that necessitated affirmation and submission, as the report itself, in a situation like this, is decisive scientific proof.

Thus, these are the unseen realities that are connected to death. We have presented them along with elucidation of their proofs. Let us move on to the study that follows it.

* * *

2. The Signs of the Hour

The date on which the Hour will be established is unknown. No one besides Allah has knowledge of it:

The Hour is one of the names of the Day of Standing, and the Day of Standing is the sublime, universal event in which the heavens and the earth will be folded up and this entire universal system will be scattered.

As for the date of this event and the time in which it will take place, Allah the Exalted has concealed the knowledge of this from all of humanity, including the Messengers and the Prophets. Therefore, no one—whenever they may be—has means of knowing how much time this world has left.

The Qur'ān has stated this unequivocally, repeatedly and emphatically. It says, **"They will ask you about the Hour: when is it due? Say: 'Knowledge of it rests with my Lord alone. He alone will reveal it at its proper time. It hangs heavy in the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except suddenly.' They will ask you if you have full knowledge of it. Say: 'Knowledge of it rests with Allah alone. But most people do not know that'"** [al-'A'rāf 7:187].

Another time it says, **"They say, 'When will this promise come about if you are telling the truth?' Say: 'The knowledge is with Allah alone and I am only a clear warner'"** [al-Mulk 67:25-26].

And the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, made this clear in the authentic ḥadīth that is agreed upon⁽¹⁾ when Jibrīl asked him, 'When is the Hour?' and he replied, {The one being asked about it knows no more than the one asking}.

(1) (tn): i.e. al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

Thus, if you hear someone determining the exact lifespan of time or giving an exact time for the Day of Standing, know that this person is either immersed in deep ignorance of the religion or a lying schemer who has a specific aim of warring and plotting against Islam.

Its greater signs:

As for the signs and portents of the Hour which are in front of us, both the Book and the Sunnah have informed us of some of the portents of it, and there is no doubt that the totality of these portents comes under that which is known of the religion by necessity, and thus it is not permissible for a Muslim to deny them or have doubts about them, even though they are from the unseen matters that have not yet taken place.

As for the detailed examination of all them, that requires us to divide these portents into two categories:

The first category is that which has been established by mass-transmitted reports that bequeath decisiveness and certainty. As for the second category, it is that which has been transmitted to us as solitary⁽¹⁾ reports.

In this discussion of ours we have not turned towards the second category of portents, even though they are many and have been transmitted to us via authentic channels whose authenticity is agreed upon, because nevertheless they do not surpass the limits of conjecture, and to have firm conviction of something by necessity requires that it be established by decisive proof, as you know.

We are only going to talk to you about the first category and it is that which has been transmitted to us via decisive reports, and thus having faith in them, because of that, is obligatory.

(1) Ar. *āḥād*, i.e. not meeting the requirements of mass-transmitted.

1. The emergence of the Dajjāl

The word *Dajjāl* is a nickname for him, and he has been given the name because of the severity of his deception⁽¹⁾ and his lying and his preternatural ability to cover the truth with falsehood. He is a man of Jewish origin who will come from the east. Amongst the people, he will claim probity and uprightness and then he will claim divinity, and in this claim he will be followed by a great number of people, most of whom will be Jewish. All the books of the Sunnah are overflowing with ḥadīths regarding him; warning, informing and describing. We will now present to you a small number of these ḥadīths.

1. The two Shaykhs, and others, have related on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stood up amongst the people, praised Allah with what is His right and then mentioned the Dajjāl. He said, {Indeed I am warning you about him and there is no Prophet except that He has warned his people. However, I will tell you something that no Prophet told his people. Indeed he is one-eyed, and your Lord is not one-eyed}'.
2. The two Shaykhs, and others, have related on the authority of Ḥudhayfah (and the wording is that of Muslim) that 'Uqbah said to him, 'Narrate to me what you have heard from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, regarding the Dajjāl, so he said, '{Indeed the Dajjāl will come out and he will have fire and water with him. As for what people think is water, it will be fire that burns. As for what the people think is fire, it will be cool, fresh water. Thus, whoever of you reaches that, let him fall into the fire, for it will be fresh and sweet.}' 'Uqbah said, 'And I heard it', affirming Ḥudhayfah.

(1) (tn): The word *dajjāl* means swindler, cheat, imposter, charlatan etc.

3. Muslim has related, as well as Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad, as well as others, a long ḥadīth regarding the Dajjāl and what will occur in his time, and we shall convey it to you in brief: It is on the authority of an-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, mentioned the Dajjāl one morning. He talked about him as if he were insignificant but also talked about him as if he were very important, until we thought he was in a cluster of date palms⁽¹⁾. When we went back to him he knew that about us, so he said, {I fear for you matters other than the Dajjāl. If he emerges and I am with you, I will contend with him on your behalf. If he emerges and I am not with you, then every person must contend for himself. Allah will take care of every Muslim on my behalf. He is a youth with short, curly hair and his eye is blind. I compare him to 'Abd al-'Uzzā ibn Qaṭṭan. Whoever of you lives to see him, let him recite the openings verses of Sūrat al-Kahf. He will appear in a place that is between the Levant and Iraq⁽²⁾ and he will wreak havoc right and left. O slaves of Allah, be firm}. We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, how long will he remain on earth?' He replied, {Forty days. One day will be like a year. One day will be like a month. One day will be like a week, and the rest of his days will be like your days}. We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, on the day that is like a year, will a day's prayers suffice?' He replied, {No. You will have to estimate it.} We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, how quickly will he move about in the earth?' He replied, {He will be like clouds driven by the wind. He will come to a people and invite them and they will believe in him and respond to him. He

(1) i.e. until we thought that he had come so close that he had reached the date palms of al-Madīnah.

(2) i.e. on a road between the two.

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will command the sky and it will send down rain and the earth and it grow crops. Then he will call a man who is brimming with youth, strike him with a sword and cut him into two pieces, and the distance between the two will be like that between an archer and his target. He will then summon and he will come forward gleaming with happiness and laughing, and it is at that point that Allah will send the Messiah, the son of Maryam. He will descend by the white minaret on the eastern side of Damascus wearing two garments lightly dyed with saffron and he will be placing his hands on the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, beads of perspiration will fall from it and when he raises it, those beads will scatter like pearls. He will seek him (i.e. he will seek the Dajjāl) out and until he catches up with him at the gate of Lod,⁽¹⁾ and then he will kill him⁽²⁾.

4. Muslim has related, as well as others, on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, who said, 'Ibn Šā'id, whose name was Šāf, was of Jewish origin and used to practise soothsaying, and word had spread in al-Madīnah that he was the Dajjāl. He said to me, "What is wrong with you, O Companions of Muḥammad? Did Allah's Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, not say that he was a Jew, and I have become Muslim? He said that he would be barren and I have a child. He said that Allah would prevent him from entering Makkah, and I have performed the Ḥajj". And he continued until I was almost convinced by what he was saying...

* * *

This, even though it is not all the ḥadīths that have been transmitted regarding him, make him clear that he has several distinguishing signs.

(1) i.e. a well-known town in Palestine near Jerusalem.

(2) See the text of the ḥadīth in full in *Muslim*: 8/197.

Thus, he is of Jewish origin, he will emerge coming from the direction of the east, regardless of the difference of opinion as to the exact location where he will appear, his right eye is defective, bulging and floating in an abominable form. He does not have any children. He will not be allowed to enter Makkah and al-Madīnah. On his forehead the word *kāfir*⁽¹⁾ will be written, and it will be clear to every Muslim, and 'Īsā, the son of Maryam, blessings and peace be upon him, will kill him.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said, 'If someone asks how Allah will make such brilliant signs happen at his hands, such as bringing the dead back to life, which is one of the sublime signs that only happen for Prophets, the answer is that it is means of testing His slaves, as they will have with them that which will indicate that he is to be nullified and not verified in his claims. This will be the fact that he is one-eyed and the word *kāfir* will be written on his forehead and everyone will read it. Thus, his claim is invalid, along with the branding of disbelief and the deficiency in essence and rank. If he were a god, he would remove that from his face. The signs of the Prophets are free from being opposed, and thus the two cannot be compared.' Then he said, 'And despite that there are other clear indications in the Dajjāl, for those of intellect, that he is lying, because he is comprised of parts, and the effect of him being made will be obvious along with the obviousness of possessing imperfections, such as the defect in his eye. Thus, when he claims to people that he is their Lord, the horrible state that people of intellect will see him in will let them know that he has not moulded a creation other than him, and proportioned him and beautified him, and he has not rid himself of imperfection. Thus, the very least that one will be obliged to say is,

(1) (tn): i.e. disbeliever.

“O you who claims to be the creator of the heavens and the earth, fashion yourself and proportion it, and remove any defects from it. If you claim that nothing happens to the Lord Himself, then remove what is written between your eyes”⁽¹⁾.

I say: You know that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has made the emergence of the Dajjāl a great and significant tribulation for mankind, as the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, warned. If Allah had not enabled him to produce certain suspensions of the norm and granted him the keys to many treasures and provisions, he would not be a tribulation.

If you know this, then know that rational research has no means of analysing the personality of this person and studying him from behind what these authentic texts have informed of. This is because the only rational outlet towards understanding anything about him is indisputable reports, and if these reports had not been transmitted, we would not conceive his existence at all, let alone have firm conviction in him and believe that he will emerge⁽²⁾.

(1) *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (13/84).

(2) Someone might ask, ‘How come the story of the Dajjāl and information about him is not found in the Qur’ān, and what is the secret behind all the information about him coming via the ḥadīths of the Messenger only?’

The answer is that it is not farfetched for the wisdom behind that to be that the Dajjāl is too insignificant in the sight of Allah to have his name recorded in His Book and in His pre-eternal speech, being recited on the tongues of people in every time and place. In its style and in its reports, the Qur’ān follows a course of not mentioning names—except for the names of the Messengers and Prophets—and some of the tyrants who they were sent to. Thus, should the Dajjāl alone be exclusively mentioned and specified?

Whatever it may be, truthful reports that make it incumbent to have firm conviction of account of them are not confined to just the Qur’ān. Rather, just as they are in the Qur’ān, they are also in the Sunnah, if they have reached via authentic, mass-transmitted channels.

Recently, an eccentricity has spread amongst some hypocritical pseudo-scholars

As for when the time of his emergence comes to pass, and the knowledge of that is with Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and he appears before people, at that point his affair will be transformed from a purely unseen issue into a tangible, palpable reality, and at that point his affair will be subject to examination and analysis just like all other tangible and observable matters.

* * *

2. The descent of ‘Īsā the Son of Maryam:

This is one of the most significant portents of the Hour, and one of the most important events that will happen before it.

The meaning of his descent is that he will come down to earth after being secluded from it throughout this lengthy period of time, in some place in Allah’s unseen dominion, Mighty and Majestic is He. He is still enjoying his first life, the same life that Allah gave him when He was a Messenger and Prophet on earth. He will remain on the earth for a certain period of time in which he establish therein the pillars of the Islamic creed with which all the Prophet were sent to establish, and he will implement the Islamic Revealed Law that abrogates all previous Revealed Laws, the one which Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, was sent

who manifest what is not actually inside them, which is that one of them will adhere to a ruling of the Revealed Law that is agreed upon and then ask you to bring the text for it from the Qur’ān, and the Qur’ān only. Otherwise, it is something that can be ignored.

On account of this, you will find one of them asking questions like this but he does not pray, fast or adhere to any of the sacred rites of Islam. This is because his excuse is that the Qur’ān has not expounded how to pray and fast and all the other rulings.

The logical conclusion for these people would be to abandon the Qur’ān that came down to Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and only rely on the Qur’ān that is sent down to each one of them directly, for that would remove all doubt and banish all suspicion.

with, without receiving any new revelation from Allah, Mighty and Majestic, during that time⁽¹⁾.

With this you know that his descent does not contradict the fact

- (1) One of the Wahhabis, from the enemies of the First Three Generations, in a comment of his regarding this same topic, wrote, 'This makes it clear that 'Īsā, peace be upon him, will rule according to our Revealed Law and according to the Book and the Sunnah, and nothing else, such as the Injīl, Ḥanafī *fiqh* and the like...'

You can see that he affirms, in unequivocal terms, in his derision of Ḥanafī *fiqh*, that it is other than the Islamic Revealed Law. Rather, it is something else, like that which is today called the Torah or the Injīl. Thus, according to his claim, Abū Ḥanīfah, may Allah have mercy on him, called on people to discard the Islamic Revealed Law and instead follow his *fiqh*.

Is there any Muslim who enjoys any ounce of fear of Allah the Exalted who would utter such shameless and unjust words regarding the First Three Generations of this Ummah and one of the Imams of the scholars of the Muslims?!

And we know for certain that this man, or the publisher of the book in which this astonishing slander is found, received several remarks from Muslim scholars all over the Muslim world, drawing attention to the necessity for this vain talk to be scratched out. Neither of them listened to the reminder of this truth and both of them refused to do anything but make themselves look like bearers of disgraceful bigotry.

Allah is the One Whose help is sought to give victory to His slaves who expended effort in extracting the rulings of the Islamic Revealed Law from the Book and the Sunnah, and thus their personal reasoning (*ijtihād*) is Allah the Exalted's ruling as far as they are concerned as well as everyone who seeks to be guided by their knowledge from amongst those who can only imitate the Imams and follow them. Whatever is correct of those personal reasonings and whatever is incorrect is the same.

Allah is the One Whose help is sought to free us from rancour and hatred towards the rest of our Muslim brethren, let alone the righteous First Three Generations and the Imams of the Muslims, and to make us from amongst those who realise the attribute of those whom Allah said about them: **"Those who come after them say, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and do not put any rancour in our hearts towards those who believe. Our Lord, You are All-Gentle, Most Merciful'"** [al-Ḥashr 59:10].

that Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, is the seal of the Prophets and the last of them, just as it does not contradict the fact that his Revealed Law abrogates all other Revealed Laws and it will remain until the Day of Standing.

Furthermore, the evidence for this is established with certainty in both the Book and the Sunnah. As for the evidence of the Book, we present to you these two verses:

This first verse is the Exalted's statement in Sūrat al-Nisā' (4:157-159): **"And their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, Messenger of Allah'. They did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Standing he will be a witness against them"**.

The key part is the Exalted's statement: **"There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before his death"**, which means that no one from the People of the Book will remain after the descent of 'Īsā, peace be upon him, except that they will believe in him before the death of 'Īsā, peace be upon him. The pronoun in "before his death" go back, as is clear from the context of the verses, to 'Īsā the son of Maryam, and it is textual evidence that he, blessings and peace be upon him, as not yet died.

Ibn Kathīr, after explaining the verse in the same way, said, 'There is no doubt that this is the correct position, because what is intended from the context of the verse is to affirm the falsity of what the Jews have claimed in terms of killing 'Īsā and crucifying him and the concession of the ignorant Christians who have conceded this. Allah has informed that that is not the case. Rather, it was made to seem

like that to them and thus they killed a resemblance and they did not ascertain that. Then He raised him up to Himself and he is still alive and he will come down before the Day of Standing, as is indicated by the mass-transmitted ḥadīths that we will mention soon, if Allah so wills. He will then kill the messiah of misguidance, break the cross, kill the pig and abolish the *jizyah*⁽¹⁾, which means that he will not accept it from any of the people of other religions. Rather, he will only accept Islam or the sword. Thus, this noble verse informs us that all of the People of the Book will believe in him at that point and none of them will fail to affirm him⁽²⁾.

The second verse is the Exalted's statement in Sūrat al-Zukhruf (43:57-61) : **"When an example is made of the son of Maryam your people laugh uproariously. They retort, 'Who is better, then, our gods or him?' They only say this to you for argument's sake. They are indeed a disputatious people. He is only a slave on whom We bestowed Our blessing and whom We made an example for the tribe of Israel. If we wished, We could appoint angels in exchange for you to succeed you on the earth. He is a sign (ilm) of the Hour. Have no doubt about it. But follow me. This is a straight path"**.

The key part in the verses is the Exalted's statement, **"He is a sign of the Hour. Have no doubt about it"**. The pronoun, as you can see, goes back to the son of Maryam, whom the verses talk about. The meaning is that 'Īsā the son of Maryam is an evidence of the establishment of the Hour. He will be as such after he comes down from the sky as a just and fair arbitrator. There is another rare reading of the verse: "He is a sign (alam) of the Hour" that also

(1) (tn): i.e. the non-Muslim poll tax, which is one dinar (4.235 grams of gold) per person per year.

(2) *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (1/577).

indicates this, i.e. an indication and sign of it⁽¹⁾. The verse should any other meaning besides this, and it is the meaning that all scholars of Qur'ānic exegesis have agreed upon.

As for the ḥadīths, they are many in number, and we present some of them to you⁽²⁾:

1. The two Shaykhs, and others, have related through several various channels on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {By the One in Whose hand is my soul, the son of Maryam is on the verge of coming down to you as a just arbitrator. He will break the cross, kill the pig and put an end to war. Wealth will be so abundant that no one will accept it, such that one prostration will be better than this world and everything in it.}' Then Abū Hurayrah said, 'If you want to, read the Exalted's statement: "There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Standing he will be a witness against them"'.
 2. Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah have related on the authority of Ḥudhayfah ibn Usayd al-Ghifārī, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, entered upon us while we were reminding one another. He said, {What are you reminding one another about?} They replied, "We are remembering the Hour." He said, {It will not happen until you see ten signs: the smoke (al-dukhān),⁽³⁾

(1) (tn): the word 'ilm means 'knowledge' or 'science', but the scholars of exegesis have always understood it to mean 'sign' in this verse, and the rare reading in which the word is 'alam instead of 'ilm merely supports this fact.

(2) If you would like to know the ḥadīths regarding the descent of 'Īsā, peace be upon him, refer to the book *al-Taṣrīḥ bi ma Tawātara min Nuzūl al-Masīḥ* by the great ḥadīth scholar Shaykh Muḥammad Anwār Shāh al-Hindī with the critical edition of the great scholar Shaykh 'Abdul Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah.

³ The majority of exegetes hold the position that the smoke that is mentioned in

the Dajjāl, the beast (al-dābbah), the sun rising from the west,⁽¹⁾ the descent of 'Īsā the son of Maryam, Yājūj and Mājūj, three landslides: one in the east, one in the west and one on the Arabian Peninsula, and the last will be the Fire that will come out from Yemen and push people towards their gathering place}'.

3. There is what we related before from Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah from the ḥadīth of al-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān, may Allah be pleased with him, from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, regarding the Dajjāl, which includes: {...it is at that point that Allah will send the Messiah, the son of Maryam. He will descend by the white minaret on the eastern side of Damascus wearing two garments lightly dyed with saffron and he will be placing his hands on the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, beads of perspiration will fall from it and when he raises it, those beads

the Qur'ān in the Exalted's statement: **"So be on the watch for a day when heaven brings forth a distinctive smoke which enshrouds mankind. This is a painful punishment!"** [al-Dukhān 44:10-11] is the smoke that will take the believer in the form of a cold and enter the ears of every disbeliever and hypocrite until it is like a head of hot water, i.e. roasted over a fire, due to the severity of the odour and heat that will afflict them. See *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (4/140).

¹ Al-Bukhārī has related on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {The Hour will not be established until the sun rises from the west. When it rises, the people will see it and they will all believe, and that is when **"no faith which a self possesses will be of any use to it if it did not believe before and earn good in its faith."** [al-An'ām 6:158] The Hour will be established while two men have spread their garment in front of them but they will not be able to sell it or fold it up. The Hour will be established when a man has milked his she-camel and has taken away the milk but he will not be able to drink it. The Hour will be established while a man repairing his trough but his animals will not be able to drink from it. The Hour will be established when a person has raised a morsel of food to his mouth but will not be able to eat it}.

will scatter like pearls. No disbeliever will find the scent of his breath except that he will die, and his breath will reach as far as his eye can see. He will seek him out and until he catches up with him at the gate of Lod⁽¹⁾, and then he will kill him. Then 'Īsā will come to a people whom Allah has protected from him, and he will wipe over their faces and tell them about their ranks in Paradise...} and the rest of the ḥadīth.

4. There is what has been related by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Jarīr via various channels on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {The Prophet are brothers of 'allāt⁽²⁾; their mothers are different and their religion is one. I am the closest of people to 'Īsā ibn Maryam because there is no Prophet between me and him. He will descend and if you see him you should recognise him. He is a well-built man with a reddish-white complexion. He will be wearing light yellow garments and his head will appear to be dripping even though no moisture will have touched it. He will pulverise the cross, kill the pig, abolish the jizyah and call humanity to Islam. In his time, Allah will destroy all religions apart from Islam. He will destroy the false messiah⁽³⁾ and then remain on the earth for forty years. Then he will die and the Muslims will pray over him}'.

These are four ḥadīths that give textual evidence of the descent of 'Īsā the son of Maryam, blessings and peace be upon him, and there are several other ḥadīths which we have no scope to enumerate here. The summary is that they are mass-transmitted ḥadīths from

(1) i.e. a well-known town in Palestine near Jerusalem.

(2) Ibn al-'Athīr has said in *al-Nihāyah*, 'The children of 'allāt are those who have different mothers but the same father, and what is meant is that their faith is the same while their Revealed Laws are different'.

(3) Ar. *al-masīḥ al-dajjāl*.

the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, from the narrations of Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Uthmān ibn Abī al-Āṣ, Abū Umāmah, al-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ Majma' ibn Hārithah and Ḥudhayfah ibn Usayd, may Allah be pleased with them.

Prior to that, we looked at the texts of the clear verses from the Book of Allah the Exalted that articulate the same as what is indicated by these ḥadīths, and thus because of this the Muslim have made consensus that the descent of 'Īsā the son of Maryam at the end of time is a firmly established part of our theology, in the manner and description that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, has mentioned to us, and that he was raised alive and in his body into the sky, as Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has made absolutely clear in His Masterful Exposition.

* * *

If this has been made clear to you, we must present to you two issues that are connected to this matter and therein we will unveil the scientific reality that should not turn into something else.

The first issue is that some writers from amongst the students of the school of Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh have denied that 'Īsā the son of Maryam, blessings and peace be upon him, was raised with his body into the sky. They say, 'He was only raised in terms of his spirit or in rank.' Therefore, they also deny his descent to earth just before the establishment of the Hour. Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt wrote an article about this in the magazine *ar-Risālah* (no.462) after which he wrote other articles on the same topic. The conclusion that he arrived at in those articles was to interpret the verses on the topic and avoid the many established ḥadīths, claiming that they are solitary⁽¹⁾ ḥadīths, which theology should not be based on!

(1) Ar. *āḥād*.

Perhaps you have read what we have written on the position of science and the intellect regarding miracles in the study of Prophethood. Therein you learned the story of the school that was established that denied miracles without denying the religion outright. Likewise, you learned about the secret behind the origination of that school and the conditions that were created for it.

If you remember what we said back then, you should know that denying the descent of 'Īsā, peace be upon him, despite what the decisive evidences have established regarding it, is nothing but a natural echo from the echoes of that school and a result that completely agrees with its principles.

It seems that both confusion and stumbling about in the dark, which the advocates of that school and its followers did not mind falling into, is embodied in the attempt to successful join between adhering to Islam and adhering to the denial of suspensions of the norm and miracles! We have no doubt that it is an attempt only in terms of the outward, wary of angering the Muslims while gradually infiltrating the place of theology in their hearts.

This stumbling about in an attempt to succeed is what made someone like Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt not mind denying seventy ḥadīths along with their narrators and declaring all exegetes of the Qur'ān from the age of the Companions down to emergence of his teacher's school to be mistaken—in order for the doctrine of denying suspensions of the norm and miracles to be sound for him.

What is even more astonishing is that he denies the ḥadīths without any proof⁽¹⁾, or even a semblance of proof, that they are false. He declares the exegetes mistaken without any proof, or semblance of proof, that they are mistaken. Yes, there is one proof. It is the deviation of that small faction that was established for well-known reasons and motives, to deny suspensions of the norm and miracles. This is the

(1) Ar. *shāhid*, which also means 'witness'.

proof that accepts the extracting of the Sunnah's texts and the Book's evidences from their roots and turning away from them completely.

As for the Sunnah, we have transmitted only some of it to you, and you know what it unequivocally indicated and that it does not accept any prattle regarding it.

As for the Book, we have transmitted to you two of the verses, both of which clearly indicate the meaning that has been understood by all exegetes as well as the noble Companions.

However, this small faction focuses all of its concern on interpreting the verse of raising and making it mean raising in terms of the spirit or a raise in rank, imagining from that if the cover of interpretation is firmly connected to the texts of raising then, after that, it must be firmly connected, with absolute ease, to the texts of descending, which is preposterous.

What they cling to the most, in this regard, is the words "take you back"⁽¹⁾ in the Exalted's statement: "When Allah said, 'Īsā, I will **take you back and raise you up to Me and purify you of those who disbelieve,**'" [Āl 'Imrān 3:55] thinking that "take you back" is synonymous with "make you die".

None of the scholars of the language have said this. Rather, the meaning of *tawaffī*⁽²⁾ is to take something and grab hold of it completely, and its synonym is *istifā*⁽³⁾. We say, 'I have received my right in full and I took it', i.e. I grabbed hold of it completely. As for *imātah*⁽⁴⁾, which means to take the spirit, it only one type of *tawaffī*, which includes this meaning and others. This delusion circulated amongst these people due to the masses frequently using this word to mean only death and being unaware of its original meaning in the language.

(1) Ar. *mutawaffika*.

(2) (tn): i.e. the noun of the word above.

(3) (tn): i.e. to receive in full.

(4) (tn): i.e. causing to die.

If these people had referred to the language, they would have seen that *tawaffī* meaning death is actually a secondary meaning of the word, as the great scholar Muṣṭafā Ṣabrī says. This is why al-Zamakhsharī wrote in his book *Asās al-Balāghah*⁽¹⁾ that using *wafāt*⁽²⁾ to mean death is metaphorical.

That which negates any metaphorical meaning of "take you back" in this verse is what the other verse decisively indicates without any room for interpretation therein:

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says in Sūrat al-Nisā' (4:157-158), **"And their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, Messenger of Allah.' They did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. Allah raised him up to Himself. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise"**.

As for the intellect of a sane person who understands Arabic speech via the rules of the Arabic language and its linguistic meanings, it will understand from the Exalted's speech: **"But they certainly did not kill him. Allah raised him up to Himself"** that Allah concealed His Prophet from them by raising him up to His sky and thus in no way did they kill him or crucify him. This meaning is evidenced by the words of the verse and their linguistic meanings, as well as the necessity of what comes before *bal*⁽³⁾ being the opposite of what comes after it. Thus, you cannot be an Arab and say, 'I am not hungry *bal* I am lying down.' Rather, you say, 'I am not hungry *bal* I am satiated.' You cannot say, 'Khālīd did not die *bal* he is a righteous man.' Rather, you say, '*bal* he is alive.' You cannot say,

(1) (tn): i.e. 'The Foundations of Eloquence'.

(2) (tn): this word is commonly used to mean death and comes from the same root as *tawaffī*.

(3) (tn): i.e. 'but' in "But they certainly did not kill him...".

'The commander was not killed *bal* he has a high rank with Allah', because having a high rank with Allah does not contradict being killed. Rather, *bal* is used to negate what preceded it based on what follows it.

Therefore, there is no doubt that the meaning of the verse is: the Jews did not kill him, as they claimed, but rather (*bal*) Allah snatched him from them and raised him into the sky. However, Shaykh Shaltūt refused to accept any meaning other than, 'They did not kill him *bal* Allah raised him in rank to Him.' This is in defiance of the rules of Arabic and its meanings and in defiance of the Arabs and all the exegetes.

And you can ask those like Shaykh Shaltūt, those who understand the verse in this way: what is the meaning of "to him" in the verse if raising means raise in rank? Does it mean that Allah made him a deity like Him?

This is because your statement: 'Allah raised the rank of so-and-so to Him' can only mean that He placed him at His rank!

Furthermore, what is the meaning of confining the raising of rank to the moment in which they are intending to crucify him and kill him? Would he not have been raised in rank before that?

These are questions that have no answer, other than to repeat the same meaningless words and interpretations in order to serve the disease of denying suspensions of the norm and miracles that has become firmly established within their soul. May Allah have mercy on whoever came up with the saying: 'A man looked at a young donkey and desired its meat. Then he turned to whoever was around him and said, "Are not its ears like a rabbit is ears?"'⁽¹⁾

(1) Some of the scholars of Al-Azhar who regularly kept the company of Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt in his final days relate that he was in his house suffering from paralysis. They relate that he burned all the books and documents that he had been keeping in which he had recorded these abnormal opinions, at the

The second issue is that ridiculous plunge that was made by a group who thought it would be a good idea to have their intellects follow the unveiled plans and schemes of the English. Thus, their leader started claiming that the one whom Allah had promised would appear on earth would be a likeness of 'Īsā and not 'Īsā himself, that he would appear on earth without descending from the sky and that he himself was that likeness that Allah had promised would appear, thus making him the promised Messiah. Then he went and claimed that he was an independent Prophet and Messenger bringing his own legislation. Then he formulated his own revelation like the Qur'ān and proceeded to invent miracles for himself and claim that they support him. He built a masjid for himself in the town of Qadian and called it 'al-Masjid al-Aqṣā'⁽¹⁾ and he called his town 'The Makkah of the Messiah'. He made a graveyard and called it 'The Graveyard of Paradise'; whoever is buried therein is from the people of Paradise, and he called his wives 'The Mothers of the Believers.' He used every means and stratagem to gather followers and adherents around him, while British colonial rule was behind him, pushing him and sustaining him. Then he declared that the outward purports of the Book and the Sunnah were to be understood figuratively, metaphorically

forefront of which was the issue of 'Īsā the son of Maryam, peace be upon. He made them bear witness that he had repented from such a belief and that he had returned to the theology of the majority of the Muslims, Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

How amazing is man's story! He is wrapped in delusion and he goes everywhere in his obstinacy, pretending not to see the truth as long as he is healthy and strong and blessings comes to him from all directions. Then, if some encompassing illness befalls him or a suffocating disaster encompasses him, he humbles himself, repents and returns! Would it not be more noble for man to appreciate his arrival at this state before it actually arrives at him, and thus not be the cause of people being deceived and confused? How many people repent while they are approaching death but their recorded whisperings continue to do what they do in the minds of people after they are gone?

(1) (tn): i.e. the same name as the masjid in Jerusalem.

and allegorically. Thus, he started distorting whatever he wanted in the revelation of the Book and the Sunnah and their rulings, and one of the outcomes of this was to conclude that *jihād*⁽¹⁾ is fabricated and abrogated and especially with regards to the English due to their magnanimous stance towards the Muslims and their good treatment of them.

He persisted in this state of his, claiming Prophethood, lying against Allah and His Prophets and putting himself in the place of the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam, before mankind, until the decree of Allah the Exalted afflicted him cholera and he died face-down in the toilet, in the most wretched state and the most repulsive sight. This death of his was a lesson for those who have insight.

That was Ghulām Aḥmad al-Qādiyānī, who was born in 1252 AH and died in 1326. The successors of this charlatan⁽²⁾ started spreading the misguidance of their prophet in different lands, and you have heard of factions of them here and Britain looking after them and honouring them in their country, for over there they have their exclusive places of worship and they have unmatched zeal to feed their falsehood and misguidance.

Our purpose behind informing you of this misguidance is not to discuss it and present evidences of its falsity, for its ludicrousness is clear and obvious and not require any study or examination. Rather, my objective was for you to know how the enemies of Islam stand behind every sect and false claim, and Britain has excelled in its plotting against Islam via this means in a way that no other enemy of Islam and the Muslims has. If you were to learn the history of this state and its past with the Muslims in general and its Islamic colonies in particular, you would learn something that baffles minds and give lessons to be learnt.

(1) (tn): For further details, see the author's book on this subject, also published by Dar al-Fikr.

(2) Ar. *dajjāl*.

3. The emergence of Yājūj and Mājūj:

Yājūj and Mājūj; these are two words that the Qur'ān uses to refer to a large nation of people who will take the world by surprise when they unravel towards it from all side, spreading corruption and destruction in the earth in a horrific and terrifying way.

However, the Qur'ān has concealed from mankind the date of their appearance, and thus no one besides Allah, Mighty and Majestic, knows their appointed time, but it has stated that their emergence will be one of the major signs that the Hour is approaching.

This is the Qur'ān's information about them:

"When Yājūj and Mājūj are let loose and rush down from every slope, and the True Promise is very close, the eyes of those who disbelieved will be transfixed: 'Alas for us! We were unmindful of this! No, rather we were certainly wrongdoers'"

[al-Anbiyā' 21:96-97].

"They said, 'Dhu'l-Qarnayn! Yājūj and Mājūj are causing corruption in the land. Can we, therefore, pay tribute to you in return for your constructing a barrier between us and them?' He said, 'The power my Lord has granted me is better than that. Just give me a strong helping hand and I will build a solid barrier between you and them. Bring me ingots of iron!' Then, when he had made it level between the two high mountain-sides, he said, 'Blow!' and when he had made it a red hot fire, he said, 'Bring me molten brass to pour over it.' They were, therefore, unable to climb over it nor were they able to make a breach in it. He said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord. But when my Lord's promise comes about, He will crush it flat. The promise of my Lord is surely true.' We will abandon them, that Day, to pound against each other in surging waves..." [al-Kahf 18:94-99].

As for the reports of the Sunnah regarding them, they confirm that which the Qur'ān has informed of them.

The two Shaykhs, and others, have related on the authority of Zaynab bint Jahsh that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, awoke from his sleep and he was saying, {There is no god but Allah. Woe to the Arabs for the evil that is approaching. Today a gap has been made in the wall of Yājūj and Mājūj like this} and the narrator made a circle with his ten fingers. 'I⁽¹⁾ said, "O Messenger of Allah, will we be destroyed when there are righteous people amongst us?" He replied, {Yes, if wretched filth becomes prevalent}'.

Muslim has related, as well as Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad, the long ḥadīth that we mentioned before on the authority of al-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān, which includes information about the Dajjāl and 'Īsā the son of Maryam. It also includes: {And Yājūj and Mājūj will be dispatched and they will infiltrate from every side. The first of them will pass by the lake of Tiberius and drink what is in it, and when the last of them pass by they will said, 'There was water here once...}'.

Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah have related on the authority of Ḥudhayfah ibn Usayd al-Ghifārī, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, entered upon us while we were reminding one another. He said, {What are you reminding one another about?} They replied, "We are remembering the Hour." He said, {It will not happen until you see ten signs: the smoke, the Dajjāl, the beast, the sun rising from the west, the descent of 'Īsā the son of Maryam, Yājūj and Mājūj, three landslides: one in the east, one in the west and one on the Arabian Peninsula, and the last will be the Fire that will come out from Yemen and push people towards their gathering place}''.

(1) (tn): i.e. Zaynab bint Jahsh.

Thus, these verses and these ḥadīths contain decisive evidence that the emergence of this nation that will act wickedly in the earth is one of the portents of the Hour and therefore faith in it comes under those matters that must be believed in by necessity due to one's faith in the Book and the Sunnah.

As for knowledge of what is beyond that in terms of details connected to their attributes and manner, and detail of their reports, in terms of theology there is no desire to arrive at any of that. Rather, most of what has been transmitted regarding details of their reports, their attributes and what they look like has been transmitted between people by way of ḥadīths that are flimsy, disclaimed⁽¹⁾ or void⁽²⁾.

Instead of delving into that, it would be better to stop at the boundaries of decisive evidence, which have been established unequivocally by the Qur'ān and the authentic ḥadīths that have been transmitted from the Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him. Then you can wait for knowledge of its essence and details, the earthly event itself, for that alone is what will guarantee the explanation of everything about them. That is because Yājūj and Mājūj are one of the unseen matters that Allah has informed will emerge before the Hour, and it is a matter that has not emerged yet. Thus, it is still in the depths of the unseen and no information about it has reached us except in a general fashion. This is because there is no lesson in the details that have come to us via void or flimsy channels, and therefore there is no point in delving into something the detailed knowledge of which cannot be accessed and the only option is guessing the unseen.

From this, you should know that what some people have said, based on inference and personal reasoning, regarding Yājūj and Mājūj being the Tatars and the Mongols, who have come and gone—

(1) Ar. *munkar*.

(2) Ar. *bāṭil*.

is baseless speech that cannot be relied upon. Rather, it appears to contradict the texts of the authentic ḥadīths that indicate that they will only appear in the time of the descent of 'Īsā the son of Maryam and after the emergence of the Dajjāl. It also suffices us to know that when this nation appears, its appearance will guarantee that all of mankind recognises them with any doubt or possibility and without any need for inference or personal reasoning.

4. The emergence of the beast of the earth:

The beast of the earth is a Qur'ānic expression that refers to an animal the knowledge of which in terms of its type, shape and form we consign to Allah, Mighty and Majestic. It will appear to mankind before the Hour, speak to them and describe each one of them in terms of faith or disbelief. Thus, it will brand the disbeliever with disbelief and stamp the believer with the stamp of faith, and that point the faith of any soul that did not believe beforehand will be of no benefit.

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says regarding this, **"When the Word is justly carried out against them, We will produce a beast from the earth which will speak to them. Truly mankind had no certainty about Our signs"**. [al-Naml 27:82].

Muslim has related with his own chain of transmission on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, who said, 'I memorised a ḥadīth from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and I never forgot it thereafter. I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saying, {Indeed amongst the first signs will be the sun rising from the west and beast coming out to mankind in the morning. One of these signs will happen first and the other will follow soon after}'.

Muslim has also related from Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {Perform your deeds before six things:

the sun rising from the west, the smoke, the Dajjāl, the beast, the death of one of you or general turmoil.

And we have already related the ḥadīth from Muslim and others: {What are you reminding one another about?} They replied, 'We are remembering the Hour.' He said, {It will not happen until you see ten signs...} and one of them is the beast of the earth.

5. The sun rising from the west:

This is one of the signs that is unequivocally mentioned only in the Sunnah. Al-Bukhārī has related a lengthy ḥadīth from the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, regarding the portents of the Hour and it mentions that the Hour will not be established until the sun has risen from the west. When it rises and mankind sees it, all of them will believe, and that is when the faith of any soul that did not believe beforehand will be of no benefit, and the same goes for any goodness it earned while having faith.

And similar to this is the ḥadīths that we have already related regarding the beast of the earth.

The meaning of the sun rising from the west is that it will appear to mankind to be coming up from the direction of the west at the time of dawn instead of appearing to come up in the east, as is normal every day. That is because it is as if Allah will make the rotation of the earth go the other way and thus mankind will see the sun doing the opposite of what they regard to be its normal course⁽¹⁾.

(1) This is not to affirm an explanation of how the sun will rise from the west, for the knowledge of that is with Allah. However, it is to make easier to have faith in it and to remind the reader that that does not go outside of the fact that it will change some of the system and order that—by Allah the Exalted's will—the universe follows.

As for looking into the rotation of the earth or it being stationary, none of that comes under what one must be firmly convinced of in terms of theology. Thus, whoever doubts as to whether it is stationary or in motion cannot be described as sinful in any way. Rather, it is from the totality of the several

These matters are from the most important portent of the Hour the knowledge of which has reached us via truthful reports, and the Muslims have made consensus that one must be firmly convinced of them.

The Hour has many other portents and signs that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, talked about in many of his ḥadīths, and many of them have emerged and been realised just as they were described, and there is no scope for us to mention them here and expand on this discussion.

And Allah the Exalted knows best.

* * *

worldly matters that Allah has left to man's ability to research and examine which He has granted him, and thus he can discover them. Whenever of these matters, which are subject to experience and sensory perception, is discovered and established by way of decisive, scientific evidence, then it is inevitable that it will be relied upon and believed in. As for the person who has not had the reality of something disclosed to him through direct, decisive evidence, it is better for him to consign the knowledge of that to Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

3. The Day of Standing and Its Events

Introduction:

When the portents of the Hour that we have discussed have been concluded and that specified moment in time comes, which is only known to the Lord of all Creation and hidden from all of His slaves, that is the moment in time when the life of this world and everything it contains will come to an end. At that time, life on this earth and all other places in the universe will come to an end, and this universal system will be completely dispersed...after spending a prolonged period time in service to its Master, adhering to the course that had been set for it without deviating from it. Indeed, this monotonous service of the universe will come to an end at that moment whose specified time is known only to Allah, Mighty and Majestic, so that after that a new phase of creation, formation and organisation can begin.

This end, at which all life in the universe will go out of existence and be demolished, its system and characteristics will be changed and its parts will be dispersed, it is the beginning of what the Qur'ān called the Hour and the Day of Standing. Then this beginning extends to the gathering of the bodies and their spirits being returned to them, then the lengthy reckoning, the scales and the traversing of the bridge that follows that, until the people of Paradise are settled in the gardens of their eternity and the people of punishment are settled in their inferno.

How the Hour will be established and life will go out of existence:

It suffice you in order to be informed of what you are obligated to know in this regard to read the Exalted's statement: **"The Trumpet will be blown and those in the heavens and those in the earth will**

lose consciousness, except those Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time and at once they will be standing upright, looking on" [al-Zumar 39:68]. and you can read the Exalted's statement: "What are they waiting for but one Great Blast to seize them while they are quibbling? They will not be able to make a will or return to their families?" [Yā Sīn 36:49-50] Then you are obligated to believe in the matter just as Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has described it.

Thus there is a trumpet⁽¹⁾ and this trumpet will be blown into and the spirits will fall unconscious as a result, except for whomever Allah wills not to fall unconscious. It is possible that what is meant by them is the spirits of the Prophets and the martyrs just as it is possible that they are some of the angels, such as Isrāfīl, Mīkā'il, Jibrīl and the Angel of Death, and there are ḥadīths and reports that have been transmitted in that regard and Allah knows best what is meant. Where is the trumpet, what does it look like and how will blowing into it have such an astonishing effect? The knowledge of all of that is with Allah, Mighty and Majestic. If He had disclosed the reality of any of that to us, we would know, but there is no scope for the intellect to be certain of any of it because Allah has hidden the knowledge of that from His slaves.

What is important is to know that there is room for people's baseless talk and the warring of nations with each other, and the use of deadly, destructive weapons that follows that—there is no room for any of this in establishing the Hour and life coming to an end, as Allah has informed. Perhaps some people who like to hasten to talk about things according to their whims and fancies approve of the notion that modern nuclear weapons explain how the establishment of the Hour will be, and they think that this explanation makes it is easier for doubters and atheists to believe in the Day of Standing. However, this is delving into unknown territory that should not be delved into

(1) Ar. *ṣūr*.

at all and personal reasoning in a matter in which there is no scope for personal reasoning investigation, other than to contradict the texts of the Qur'ān, according to what you have seen, in every way. Those who dare to delve into this, with a good intention and noble objective, are unaware of the fact that this blowing of the trumpet that Allah has described will cause all spirits to fall unconscious, including the spirits of the living and the dead and the spirits of mankind, the angels and the jinn. Where is this in relation to what atom bombs and hydrogen bombs in terms of considerable danger and devastation? What effect on or power could it have over the angels and the spirits of the dead?

The evidences for the establishment of the Hour:

Know, my Muslim brother, that the establishment of the Hour is the most significant of the reports of the unseen that the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, has informed us of, absolutely.

It is the most significant of them and the most immense of them, since it is so strange and remote from what man is accustomed and what he can imagine and since the baffling punishment that man is waiting for at that time is something that the imagination almost cannot conceive, or the eternal bliss that contains that which no eye has seen, no hear has heard and that which has never occurred to the heart of any man.

It is the most significant of them and the most immense of them since it is the day in which humanity will stand humiliated, abased and weak before his Creator, Who will speak to him, reckon him and ask him about everything single thing, about everything big and small, after he has passed through the desert of this world hearing about Him and not seeing Him, and perhaps also not believing in Him.

It is the most significant of them and the most immense of them because all of human existence revolves around it. Man's life today, with the labour, provision, striving, intellect, passions and desires

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It is the most significant of them and the most immense of them because all of human existence revolves around it. Man's life today, with the labour, provision, striving, intellect, passions and desires

that it contains, all of that is a facilitation and a preparation for meeting his Creator on this day.

On account of the significance of this immense event from all of these angles, the Qur'ān continuously informs man of it and warns him about it by incessantly emphasising it. There is almost no page in this Sublime Book that you can read over without finding some discussion about the Day of Standing and man's attention being drawn towards it.

You will not find the Book of Allah the Exalted to be more replete with information on anything and intensely stressing it in all the various styles of Arabic than the Day of Standing. You will not find it drawing attention to something immense and warning about something significant, with astonishing versatility in structure and style, the way it draws mankind's attention to the Day of Standing and warns them about what they will meet therein.

All of this is because it is completely remote and completely different from the reality that people currently see and sense. It is one of the most sublime unseen matters that are hidden from man in this life of his. Indeed, it is the unseen itself. It is the unseen which, when it is dispelled and unveiled, everything that man denies and disbelieves in will appear before his eyes. His looking at it will be sharp, he will be certain of it and he will not deny any of it. It is the covering about which the Qur'ān has said, **"You were heedless of this so We have stripped you of your covering and today your sight is sharp"** [Qāf 50:22].

There is no doubt that these reports that warn, alert and draw attention in Allah the Exalted's Book are the greatest evidence and proof for the establishment of the Hour and the Day of Standing and all the events that follow thereafter.

Let us contemplate a selection of these verses with a wakeful heart and pensive intellect and become aware of what they contain in

terms of the various forms of emphasis with all kinds of manners and styles which address man's sentiment, his intellect and his feelings, until with that he overcomes this material world that restricts his entire imagination and until he liberates himself from the prison of his worldly life and wakes up from the dreams that he moves about in. Perhaps he will take into account that which will shortly surprise him and prepare for it.

Look at this verse and reflect on the intense emphasis that it is immersed in:

"Allah, there is no god but Him. He will gather you to the Day of Standing, about which there is no doubt. And whose speech could be truer than Allah's?" [al-Nisā' 4:87].

Look at these other verses that are in the form of debate and argument, in order to eliminate any doubts and suspicions that revolve around man as to whether the occurrence of this immense event is possible, in an inimitable style in which the authority of Lordship is manifested and with the same emphasis that you saw in the previous verse:

"Man say, 'When I am dead, will I then be brought out again alive?' Does man not recall that We created him before when he was not anything? By your Lord, We will collect them and the devils together. Then we will assemble them around Hell on their knees" [Maryam 19:66-67].

Reflect on these other verses which the Creator has formulated in a style which manifests the distress and grief of those who were intoxicated by the material world they lived and were heedless of a reality that they will shortly see. No warning benefits them and no reminder affects them:

"Mankind's Reckoning has drawn very close to them, yet they heedlessly turn away. No fresh reminder comes to them from

their Lord without their listening to it as if it were a game" [al-Anbiyā' 21:1-2].

And in this other verse, look at how the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, alerts the intellect to the fact that the sublimity of this universe and everything it contains is only in relation to man's power, and thus he should not use sublimity that is not actually sublimity, except in relation to man's weakness, as evidence for his denial of the Day of Standing:

"That day we will fold up the sky like folding up the pages of a book. As we originated the first creation so we will regenerate it. It is a promise binding on Us. That is what we will do" [al-Anbiyā' 21:104].

At other times, a completely different, calm style is used instead of these styles, and it is the style of scientific examination and admonishing the intellect as to what it should be aware of and how it should reflect and consider, in a didactic form as if it is a lesson from a teacher to his student and not news from a sublime deity to His slaves:

"Mankind! If you are in any doubt about the Resurrection, know that we created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm, then from a clot of blood, then from a lump of flesh, formed yet unformed, so We may make things clear to you. We make whatever We will stay in the womb until a specified time and then we bring you out as children so that you may reach your full maturity. Some of you die and some of you revert to the lowest form of life so that, after having knowledge, they then know nothing at all. And you see the earth dead and barren; then when We send down water onto it, it quivers and swells and sprouts with luxurious plants of every kind. This is because Allah is the True Lord and gives life to the dead and has power over all things, and the Hour is coming without any doubt and Allah will raise up all those in the graves" [al-Ḥajj 22:5-7].

As for in several other cases, the discussion about the Day of Rising and its events comes in an illustrative style which removes the barrier of the unseen and then distance in time that exists between it and humanity. It transfers them to the atmosphere of these events such that it is as if they are witnessing them with their own eyes, and they have left behind them their days that they lived in this world. Regret starts to cut the hearts of the deniers and rejecters but it is to no avail:

"Do not consider Allah to be unaware of what the wrongdoers perpetrate. He is merely deferring them to a Day on which their sight will be transfixed, rushing headlong—heads back, eyes vacant, hearts follow. Warn mankind of the Day when the punishment will reach them. Those who did wrong will say, 'Our Lord, reprieve us for a short time. We will respond to Your call and follow the Messengers.' 'But did you not swear to Me before that you would never meet your downfall?'" [Ibrāhīm 14:42-44].

"The Trumpet will be blown and at once they will be sliding from their graves towards their Lord. They will say, 'Alas for us! Who has raised us from our resting-place? This is what the All-Merciful promised us. The Messengers were telling the truth.' It will be but one Great Blast, and they will all be summoned to Our presence" [Yā Sīn 36:51-53].

And maybe the Qur'ānic system will go back, after all these various styles of emphasis, elucidation and illustration, to handling this matter quickly, in which the warner is not concerned as to whether the deniers are certain now or will become so later, for the warner came to them and the vague was made clear to them, and in that there is profundity. Look at His statement with the eye of your heart:

"Every communication has its time, and you will certainly come to know." [al-An'ām 6:76].

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“They ask you about the Hour: ‘When will it come?’ What are you doing mentioning it? Its coming is your Lord’s affair. You are only the warner of those who fear it. On the Day they see it, it will be as if they had only lingered for the evening or the morning of a single day” [al-Nāzi‘āt 79:42-46].

Indeed examining the verses that urge man to be aware, with all his limbs, intellect and sentiment, of that significance of this day that is approaching him and to prepare for it accordingly—we say that examining that is lengthy matter. Thus, all you have to do is approach Allah’s Book, may His majesty be manifest, and contemplate the overflowing discussion therein about the Hour and its affairs and the various, inimitable styles of emphasising the matter and warning man against being deceived by anyone about it.

This is evidence followed by evidence that after their deaths humanity will stand before the Lord of all Creation.

And this evidence follows what we clarified before, which is that the intellect cannot conceive that the story of a man starts from cover of birth and ends with the cover of death unless we conceive that the One Who created him, and gave him a free hand in life, did so frivolously, and you know that frivolity is one of the most things that are impossible in relation to Allah’s essence, may His majesty be manifest.

Indeed the story of man in this life of his is nothing but incomplete preliminaries demanding consequences, like a small part of a completed narration. Thus, the one who lives his entire life as an immoral transgressor sowing corruption in the earth and he leaves nothing behind but the effects of his oppression and transgression, the one who lives oppressed and helpless, being afflicted with calamities from every direction and being on the receiving end of people’s blows and oppression from every quarter and the one who lives being tested and afflicted in his body throughout his life and

sees people enjoying life without him being able to taste any of their pleasures, all of these people have only lived a small part of the story of their existence in the universe. Then the curtain of death will fall over them, separating between the two parts of the story; it does not come to an end and its events are not concluded.

Of course, it is more appropriate for whoever has already decided that his intellect does not believe in the existence of the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, not to believe in the second part of man’s story. It is not too much for him to conceive frivolity in the story of this man on the surface of this earth after conceiving frivolity in the existence of the entire universe.

And you know that we are only addressing those are already with us in terms of the discussion about Allah’s existence and its evidences and the sending of Prophets and its evidences. And it will not suffice the reader at all to listen to anything we are saying here if he has missed out on a great deal of what we already discussed in the foundation of the study.

How the bodies are gathered and their spirits are returned to them:

Science cannot describe how the bodies will be gathered or analyse it and explain it using the scientific method that man practices in this life. This is because of what we have already mentioned in terms of the business of science being confined to starting its research with subject matters that exist in our external experience, removed from the inspiration of the intellect or pure contemplation. Then they impose themselves upon it according to what observation and experience indicate, after which the intellect’s only duty is to explain them and analyse them.

The bodily return has not yet been realised, and that means that the subject matter that science is able to examine and study does

not yet exist. Thus, it would be frivolous to ask a microscope about the analysis of something that has not yet been placed under it from amongst the categories of compounds.

All that we can examine and study about this subject is to start by asking:

Is the return going to be after the bodies have gone out of existence completely or after their parts and the parts of their parts have disintegrated in the folds of the earth, the bellies of whales or the depths of the seas?

No decisive report from Allah, may His majesty be manifest, has been transmitted regarding this, and thus we are not obligated to decisively affirm that absolute non-existence will befall everything before the Day of Standing or to decisively affirm the opposite of that. However, what we are obligated to decisively affirm is that everything apart from His essence, Glorified and Exalted is He, is subject, in reality, to death and non-existence. This is because the source of their existence is external to them and does not originate from their reality and their essence, regardless of whether they actually become non-existent after that or they disintegrate, decompose and fragment.

However, the majority of scholars have preferred the second position, which is the disintegration and dispersal of the parts, due to the outward purport of the Exalted's statement: **"All things are passing except His Face"** [al-Qaṣaṣ 28:88]. and the Exalted's statement: **"Everything on it will pass away⁽¹⁾; but the Face of your Lord will remain, Master of Majesty and Generosity"** [al-Raḥmān 55:26-27]. and the Exalted's statement: **"We know exactly how the earth eats them away. We possess an all-preserving Book"** [Qāf 50:4].

The passing⁽²⁾ of something refers to its decomposition and it

(1) Ar. *fānin*, which comes from the noun *fanā*.

(2) Ar. *halāk*.

no longer being in use. When you say that someone has passed, it means that he has died. When *halāk* is used in reference to a house, it means that it has collapsed and is no longer fit for being lived in. The word *halāk* can be used without meaning that something has gone completely out of existence, and the same goes for the word *fanā*, which you can use in reference to clothes and bones when either of them become broken pieces and dispersed parts that cannot be benefitted from in any way. Something that affirms that what is meant by *fanā* is what we are saying, indeed especially death only, is the Exalted's statement: "Everything on it will pass away", i.e. everything on earth is *fānin*. Thus, the ruling of *fanā* being applied to everything living on the face of the earth and an exception being made for His Essence, may His majesty be manifest, makes it clear that the meaning of *fanā* is death. As for the earth itself and what is upon it in terms of its ruling, it is passing with this meaning from before⁽¹⁾.

As for what the second verse indicates, this is in view of it being a refutation of those who deny the gathering by saying, 'If we have died and we are dust?'...that is a remote return, since it has responded to their denial and rejection of that with the elucidation that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, knows the final destination of their bodies that dissolved in the folds of the earth and wherever else, and He has a record that contains the number of atoms these bodies have which have disintegrated from their proper places. Each atom is determined precisely as to who it belongs to. Thus, what is so astonishing about them being gathered once again just as iron fillings that have been mixed in with a handful of soil are gathered together by a magnet?!

(1) The use of the word *man* [i.e. 'who' in the verse in Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ], which is normally used in reference to those who have intellect [i.e. humans, jinn, angels], does not mean that only those who have intellect will pass away. Rather, it is only those who have intellect will benefit from being frightened in this matter, and thus the Exalted singled them out for mention.

The verse thus indicates that the gathering will be by way of gathering the atoms that have been dispersed and disintegrated and not by way of bringing them into existence after being completely non-existent. This meaning is also indicated in His statement, may His majesty be manifest: **“Does man imagine We will not reassemble his bones? On the contrary! We are well able to reshape his fingers”** [al-Qiyāmah 75:3-4].

With this you know that that which goes back to being together again and being alive is the same parts of man that he lived with in this world. What is meant is his same parts, the same original parts with which he received life. As for whatever is added to them after that, it is not stipulated that the same ones comes back. The scholars of creed and scholastic theology⁽¹⁾ have researched this matter at length, and in reality the knowledge of that is with Allah, Mighty and Majestic. We have no means, as I have said to you, of analysing or elucidating any of these unseen matters from which Allah, may His majesty be manifest, has not yet lifted the veils of His unseen.

* * *

The Reckoning

This is Allah's examination of His slaves before they depart from the gathering according to what they reaped in their worldly lives by way of actions, statements and beliefs, whether good or bad, and it will be in a form or means that no one besides Him knows.

The wisdom behind this reckoning is that Allah will manifest the virtues and outstanding traits of those who fear Him and the scandalous and disgraceful acts of the disobedient, and that will be for everyone for to see.

(1) See what the author of *al-Mawāqif* has written in this regard (2/442) and Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftanāzānī in his commentary on *al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah* (400).

This is something that Allah warned His slaves about in this life and thus is must be realised in the Hereafter.

The divine report has indicated that this reckoning is the most important and the most immense event that man will see on the Day of Standing, such that He, Glorified and Exalted, has given the Day of Standing the name 'the Day of Reckoning'. He has said in His Masterful Exposition:

“This is what you are promised on the Day of Reckoning” [Ṣād 38:53].

“Those who are misguided from the Way of Allah will receive a harsh punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning” [Ṣād 38:53].

“Mūsā said, ‘I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud man who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning’ [Ghāfir 40:27].

Some of the clearest verses that decisively indicate that Allah will reckon His slaves on the Day of Standing are the Exalted's statement: **“Whether you divulge what is in yourselves or keep it hidden, Allah will still call you to account for it. He forgives whoever He wills and He punishes whoever He wills”** [al-Baqarah 2:284] and the Exalted's statement: **“As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will be given an easy reckoning and return to his family joyfully. But as for him who is given his book behind his back, he will cry out for destruction but will be roasted in a searing blaze”** [al-Inshiqāq 84:7-12]. There are several other verses for which there is no need to enumerate as they are virtually not hidden from anyone. Their indication that the reckoning is affirmed on the Day of Standing is decisive by the consensus of all Muslims.

As for how long or short the reckoning will be for man and how difficult or easy it will be, this will differ according to how people differ and the disparity of their ranks. For some people, the

reckoning will last as long as it takes to milk a camel—as the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him has said, and for other people it will be prolonged and they will experience intense agony. There will also be disparity amongst these people according to the states that they left behind them in this world.

Know that faith in the reckoning necessitates faith in the books, and they are papers that bear the name of their owners, each person will be given his either in his right or his left. Recorded therein is everything they committed or earned. Allah knows best how these papers will be, their type and how the writing will be recorded on them. All that Allah has taught us by way of His decisive informing is that whoever is given his book in his right is from the felicitous and whoever is given his book in his left is from the people of wretchedness and misguidance.

It suffices you to listen attentively to the elucidation of the matter in these splendid verses, and then submit to them and be absolute certain of their contents:

“The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah and, on the Day that the Hour arrives, the Day the liars will be lost. You will see every nation on its knees, every nation summoned to its book: ‘Today you will be repaid for what you did. This is Our Book speaking against you with the truth. We have been recording everything you did’” [al-Jāthiyah 45:27-29].

The Horror of the Situation and its Calamities

Know that there is no point in illustrating this horror and elucidating it, i.e. a description that is written or a narrative that is read. Rather, it is something that Allah has hidden and concealed until its time. It suffices you to know that it is the most horrific of all horrors and the most sublime of every sublimity, and when imagining its sublimity you can call to mind the Exalted’s statement: **“Mankind! Have fear**

of your Lord! The quaking of the Hour is a terrible thing. On the day they see it, every nursing woman will be oblivious of the baby at her breast, and every pregnant woman will abort the contents of her womb, and you will think people are drunk though they are not drunk; it is just that the punishment of Allah is so severe” [al-Hajj 22:1-2] or the Exalted’s statement: **“When the Deafening Blast comes, the Day a man will flee from his brother and his mother and his father, and his wife and his children: on that Day every man among them will have concerns enough of his own”** [‘Abasa 80:33-37].

And the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, described a part of the horror of the situation in what has been related by the two Shaykhs on the authority of ‘Ā’ishah, may Allah be pleased with her. She said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, saying, {The people will be gathered on the Day of Standing barefooted, naked and uncircumcised.} I said, “O Messenger of Allah, will not the men and women look at each other?” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied, {O ‘Ā’ishah, the matter will be too severe for them to be looking at each other}’.

Likewise, he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, made it clear that in that time the sun will approach the heads of created beings, until it is only a mile from them, and sweat will be flowing on the earth up to a distance of seventy fathoms. There will be those whose sweat reaches their ankles, those whose sweat reaches their knees, those whose sweat reaches their groins and those sweat silence them, and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, pointed towards his mouth.

It suffices you, in order to understand the horror of this day, to know that the people will desire to depart from it, even if it is to the Fire, and Allah has given it the name ‘the greatest terror’.

However, none of this horror will befall—as has been transmitted in truthful reports—the Prophets and those whom Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has accepted as His righteous friends and slaves. This is indicated by the Exalted's statement: **"Those for whom the Best from Us was pre-ordained, will be far away from it. They will not hear the slightest hint of it and they will remain there timelessly, for ever, among everything their selves desire. The greatest terror will not upset them and the angels will welcome them: 'This is your Day, the one you were promised'"** [al-Anbiyā' 21:101-103].

The authentic ḥadīth has indicated that amongst those who will not be upset by the greatest terror and will be safe from this painful torment will be those seven categories of people that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, informed would be shaded by Allah on a day when there is no shade but his shade... and the rest of the ḥadīth.

So strive, O sane human being—while the opportunity of life is still in your hands—to be one of those people of whom he said, 'the greatest terror will not upset them'. Strive to be one of them through your manners, your character, your religion, and your fulfilment of your Lord's right. Do not let yourself be deceived from that by long hopes and the power of your passions and desires. By Allah, you are on the brink of seeing this situation with your own eyes, at which point the far will be near and the doubted will be realised. The opportunity will be gone and regret will be of no benefit.

It would be useless for you to hear these words while turning away from them in indifference, regarding them as mere fantasy. If someone were to tell you about the wonders of this world before you saw them, you would deny them in the strongest terms and also regard them as fantasy. Then the passing of the nights and days is taking from the traverse that is this world, which you entered yesterday and will leave tomorrow, to that horror that you are not concerned about.

You will never be able to stop the passage of time, and therefore it would be better for you to take heed and contemplate with a mind that is pure and free of blemishes, inclinations and passions, and no intellect of a sane person can make its owner realise more than what I am saying.

The Scale and the Weighing

Both of them are from that which Allah has informed of in His Masterful Book, with clear, unequivocal expression that cannot be interpreted. Thus it is a truth that must be believed in as it has been informed of.

Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has said, **"The weighing that Day will be the truth"** [al-'A'rāf 7:8]. He has also said, "We will set Just Scale on the Day of Standing". And He has said, **"Those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful. Those whose scales are light, they are the losers of their selves, remaining in Hell timelessly, forever"** [al-Mu'minūn 23:102-103].

We must refrain, as the scholars have said, from specifying the type of this scale and its substance and manner. Is it one scale for all created beings or several scales? These are all matters regarding which we have no means of drawing decisive conclusions. However, we believe in what Allah has informed us of and we say that it is as Allah has informed us of, may His majesty be manifest, without interpreting and without dragging our intellects into understanding these verses figuratively or metaphorically or something similar.

As for the manner of the scale of deeds, and they are relative matters, that which indicates that they are created in the form of bodies that have weight and dimension has been transmitted. This includes the Exalted's statement: **"Those who deny the meeting with Allah have lost, so that, when the Last Hour comes upon them suddenly, they will say, 'Alas for how we neglected it!'"**

They will bear their burdens on their backs. How evil is what they bear!" [al-An'ām 6:31] However, we entrust the manner of the weighing and the detailed knowledge of that to Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

By doing so, we free ourselves from the need to delve into this study, the way the Mu'tazilah did, and we free ourselves from the need to interpret and modify.

As for the question as to why there is weighing and what it is needed for when Allah knows best about the deeds and their quantity and significance—there is no divine need for any of that, as is known. However, when Allah's standard practice in regulating this worldly life and in administering the affairs of man according to the system of causes and things caused and the intellect and imagination becoming accustomed to there being a connection between every effect and the thing that affected it and every existent thing and its cause, the divine wisdom required that this same system apply to events that occur after the second genesis and the other life, and that man receive the information about this in the same way that his intellect is used to and his intellect is imbibed with.

This is one thing and the second thing is that in concretising these relative matters and calling to mind the scale and them being weighed, it is made clear to man that the contents of the second life are nothing other than an accurate reflection of the contents of the first life, just as the harvest season is an accurate reflection of the cultivating and sowing season. And this meaning would not be made absolutely clear to man if it were said to him that the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, rewards everything or punishes it according to what has been established in His knowledge, may His majesty be manifest, regarding what someone has earned and done without showing him those deeds, reminding him of them and placing them in front of him in an embodied form so that he can compare between

them and their embodied consequences, which are also in front of him on that day. Therefore, Allah the Exalted's wisdom necessitated that a tangible scale be established for the deeds and that they by concretised in and of themselves or by means of their pages, and indeed it necessitated that the limbs and organs themselves articulate the sins they committed, until the deeds themselves articulate the reality of justice and reward and the preliminaries of the worldly life are connected to the consequences of the Day of Standing.

The Bridge and Traversing It

Al-Ṣirāṭ⁽¹⁾ bears to two meanings: one of them is in this world and it is the way that Allah has legislated for His slaves and commanded them to follow and adhere to. It is the meaning in the Exalted's statement: **"This is my Path and it is straight, so follow it"** [al-An'ām 6:153] and the Exalted's statement: **"Guide us on the Straight Path"** [al-Fātiḥah 1:6].

The second of them is in the Hereafter and it is the bridge that is raised over Hellfire on the Day of Standing. Then the people traverse it according to their different denominations and sects and their disparity of ranks. There are those for whom it be so fine under their feet that it will be finer than a sword, and thus they will stagger over it and then will fall into the Fire, and then there are those for whom it will be vastly expanded under their feet and thus they will cross over it the abiding blessings that Allah has prepared for them.

The Exalted's statement indicates this: **"There is not one of you who will not come to it. That is the final decision of your Lord. Then We will rescue those who are godfearing and We will leave the wrongdoers in it on their knees"** [Maryam 19:71-72] There is also the Exalted's statement: **"If we wished, we could put out their eyes. Then, though they might race for the bridge, how would they**

(1) (tn): i.e. 'bridge' or 'path'.

see?" [Yā Sīn 36:66] Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have related, as well as Muslim, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that some people said, 'O Messenger of Allah, will we see our Lord on the Day of Standing?' He replied, {Do you have blurred vision when the moon is full and there are no clouds?} and so forth until he said, {Allah will place a bridge over Hell and my nation and I will be first to cross it. The supplication of the Messengers that day will be, 'Make it safe, make it safe.' There will be hooks like the thorns of the giant taro plant. Have you see the thorns of the giant taro plant?} They said, 'Indeed, O Messenger of Allah.' He replied, {They are like the thorns of the giant taro plant except that only Allah, may His majesty be manifest, knows how immense they are. They will snatch people according to their deeds. There are those who will be destroyed by their deeds and those for whom it will be lighter and then they will be saved}.

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim have also related on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {People will cross the bridge over the Fire and there will be spikes, thorns and fishhooks snatching people left and right, and on its sides there will be angels saying, 'O Allah, make it safe. O Allah, make it safe.' Some people will cross it like a flash of lightning. Some people will cross it like the wind. Some people will cross it like a running horse. Some people will run across it. Some people will walk across it. Some people will crawl across it and some people will creep across it. As for the people of the Fire, those who deserve it, they will not die nor will they live. As for some other people, they will be taken according to their sins and crimes and thus they will burn and be like charcoal. Then they will be interceded for}.

Know that this *ṣirāṭ* is only an embodiment of the meaning of the *ṣirāṭ* that Allah has made incumbent upon His slaves in this

life. Thus, there are those who restrict themselves with regards to the means of life and livelihood such that they do not step outside Allah's *ṣirāṭ* and way that He has commanded to be followed, and then the *ṣirāṭ* extended over Hell is expanded for him. Then there are those who make the means of life and livelihood expansive for themselves such that they transgress Allah's bounds and rulings, and tomorrow the *ṣirāṭ* will be made confined for them. We present to you what Imam al-Ghazālī, may Allah be pleased with him, has said in elucidating this reality:

'Whoever is upright upon the straight path, the *ṣirāṭ* of the Hereafter is made light for him and his is saved. Whoever deviates from uprightness in this life and weighs his back down with the burdens of sins and disobeys, he will stumble when he takes his first step on the *ṣirāṭ* and he will fall. Now, think about the terror that will enter your heart when you see the *ṣirāṭ* and its fineness. Then your gaze will fall upon the blackness of Hell below it. Your ears will ring with the breathing of the Fire and its anger. You have been burdened with the task of walking over the *ṣirāṭ* with your weak state, your disturbed heart, your feet quaking and your back weighed down with sins that would prevent you from walking on open land, let alone the sharpness of the *ṣirāṭ*! Look at your state, and you will be creeping on it and ascending it while your back is weighed down with sins. You will look right and left and you will see the creation falling down in numbers into the Fire, and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, will be saying, 'O Lord, make it safe, make it safe.' Loud, lamenting screams and wailing will come up to you from the depths of Hell because of the abundance of created being whose feet slipped on the *ṣirāṭ*, so how will you be if your feet slip and it will not benefit you to have regret, and you will scream and wail in lament and say, "This is what I used to fear. If only I had prepared in advance for this life of mine. If only I had gone the way

of the Messenger. If only I had not taken so-and-so for a friend. If only I were dust. If only I were something discarded and forgotten. If only my mother had not given birth to me". How do you see your intellect now when these perils are in front of you? If you are not a believer in this, then how long will your residing being with the disbelievers in the lowest depths of Hell. If you are a believer in this but heedless of it and neglectful in your preparation for it, how great is your loss and your oppression. Your faith is of no benefit to you if it does not push you to strive to seek Allah the Exalted's pleasure through obeying Him and leaving disobeying Him?"⁽¹⁾

O Allah, enable us turn to You with proper repentance in this life and let us meet You in a good state on that Sublime Day, and save us from Your punishment with purity from You and Your grace, O Lord of all Creation.

The Intercession and the Hawḍ⁽²⁾

As for the intercession, in reality, it is one of the manifestations of Allah's mercy, Mighty and Majestic is He, towards whomever of His slaves He wants in that situation, and this manifestation will be made clear in many forms. This includes Allah forgiving whomever He wants from amongst His disobedient slaves as long as He is not from the people of disbelief and idolatry, and in clarifying this reality, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, says, "**Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that**" [al-Nisā' 4:48].

It also includes Allah ennobling His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with intercession on behalf of his nation,

(1) *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (4/524).

(2) (tn): This term is not usually translated as 'pond', 'pool' or 'basin', but none of these terms carry the necessary grandeur and majesty that is required.

and it is what the scholars have called 'The Great Intercession'⁽¹⁾.

This is embodied in several intercessions, the greatest of which is his intercession, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for the people of the gathering in general in order that they be delivered from the length of the standing and its horrors. It includes him entering a group of his nation into Paradise without reckoning and it includes him interceding on behalf of those who deserve the Fire so that they do not enter it. It also includes him interceding so that believers and monotheists can be removed from it after entering it. According to the most correct position, the Prophets, angels and those who draw near from amongst the believers partake in this intercession as well as the ones mentioned before.

The praiseworthy station⁽²⁾ that Allah has promised His Messenger is only the rank that grants him these various intercessions on behalf of the gathering in general and his nation in particular. Ibn Jarīr said, 'Most of the people of interpretation have said, "That is the station that Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, will have on the Day of Standing to intercede on behalf of the people in order for their Lord to relieve them of the immensity they are in due to the severity of that day"'⁽³⁾.

Based on this, the praiseworthy station that Allah the Exalted will grant to his Prophet on the Day of Standing is not a name for a specific intercession from amongst these intercessions. Rather, it is a name for all of them such that all created beings will envy him for it. And his intercession, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for the people of the gathering to relieve them from the length of the

(1) Ar. *al-shafā'ah al-'uẓmā*.

(2) Ar. *al-maqām al-maḥmūd*.

(3) See the commentary of the Exalted's statement: "**It may well be that your Lord will raise you to a Praiseworthy Station**" [(tn): 17:79] in *Sūrat al-Isrā'* in *Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī* and *Ibn Kathīr*.

standing is the beginning of this praiseworthy station, as al-Laḳānī has said in his commentary on *Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*.⁽¹⁾

There are a great deal of verses and ḥadīths that talk about the intercession, and they include the Exalted's statement: **"They have no right of intercession. None do but those who have a contract with the All-Merciful"** [Maryam 19:87]. and His statement: **"On that Day intercession will be of no avail except for him whom the All-Merciful has authorised and with whose speech He is well-pleased"**. [Ṭaha 20:109] Then there is the long ḥadīth that has been related by the two Shaykhs in which the people go to the Prophets, one after the other, hoping that they will intercede. Then they go to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and he intercedes on behalf of a large group of believers.

However, this intercession, as I have told you, is one of the manifestations of Allah's mercy towards His slaves for whom He has willed forgiveness but it takes this form as a way of honouring His Messenger, His Prophets and some of the righteous from amongst His slaves.

As for the ḥawḍ, it is a sublime nobility with which Allah has distinguished Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the Qur'ānic elucidation clearly mentions it in the Exalted's statement: **"Truly We have given you the Great Abundance⁽²⁾. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. It is the one who hates you who is cut off without an heir"**⁽³⁾. Imam Muslim has related on the authority of Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, 'While the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was with us in the masjid, he took a nap and then woke up smiling. We said, "What makes you laugh, O Messenger of Allah?"

(1) See 'Abdul al-Salām al-Laḳānī's commentary on the *Jawharah*, p.242.

(2) Ar. *al-kawthar*.

(3) (tn): Sūrat al-Kawthar 108:1-3.

He replied, {A sūrah has just been sent down to me}. Then he read, {In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful: "Truly We have given you the Great Abundance⁽¹⁾. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. It is the one who hates you who is cut off without an heir."} Then he said, {Do you know what the *kawthar* is?} We replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, {It is a river that my Lord, Mighty and Majestic, has promised me upon which there is abundant goodness, and it is the ḥawḍ that my nation will come to on the Day of Standing. Its cups are as numerous as the stars in the sky. A slave will be moved from it and I will say, 'My Lord, he is from my nation.' He will reply, 'You do not know what he invented after you'}.}

Muslim has related in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and Mālik in his *Muwattaʿa*, as well as others, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, went out to the graveyard and said, {Peace be upon you, O abode of believers. If the Lord so wills, we shall be joining you. I would love to see our brothers.} We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, are we not your brothers?' He replied, {No. You are my Companions. Our brothers are those who have not yet come, and I will be waiting for them at the ḥawḍ}. We then said, 'O Messenger of Allah, how will you know who is from your nation from those who come after you?' He replied, {Have you not seen that if a man has a white horse amongst black horses, he will know his horse?} We said, 'Indeed, O Messenger of Allah.' He said, {They will come to me on the Day of Standing gleaming white from their ablution, and I will be waiting for them at the ḥawḍ. Then some men will be chased away from my ḥawḍ the way a stray camel is chased away, and I will say, 'Come forward! Come forward!' It will then be said, 'You do not know what they changed after you.' I will then say, 'Away with them, away with them, away with them'}.}

(1) Ar. *al-kawthar*.

It has been made clear to you from what we have mentioned that the water of the ḥawḍ and the kawthar is the same, as the aforementioned ḥadīth of Muslim makes clear, and its source is in Paradise. Therefore, whatever flows in it from there is the water of the kawthar, and whatever is allotted from it to be outside of it is the water of the ḥawḍ, and it is that which the believers who have not changed Allah's religion at all will come to. It will be before the enter Paradise and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, will be waiting for them.

The ḥadīths transmitted regarding the ḥawḍ and its description are very many in number, more than the required limit for mass-transmission.

It is also one of the manifestations of Allah the Exalted's ennoblement of His Prophet Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and His mercy towards His slaves.

The Paradise and the Fire and Being in One of Them Eternally

They are the outcome one of which must be where man's life ends up. It is the final and permanent outcome, after which there is no outcome.

There is no scope for describing the horrors of the Fire and its punishment, nor is there any to describe the blessings of Paradise and the means of bliss therein. The discussion of that would be lengthy, and in any case one would virtually still not be able to imagine any of that reality which today is hidden from all of mankind, until that day's appointed time comes, which is known and determined in the knowledge of Allah, may His majesty be manifest.

Rather, the discussion here is connected to two realities that a Muslim must be aware of and be convinced of with firm conviction.

The first reality: Paradise and the Fire and tangible things:

Yes, Paradise and the Fire are tangible realities that are connected to both the soul and the body together. They are not just a fantasy that goes about the soul or the spirit alone.

This is because if that were the case, there would be no meaning to the bodily return that we have finished elucidating and which Allah the Exalted's Book is replete with mentioning, emphasising and warning of its consequences in several of its passages and decisive verses. It is self-evident that no one would deny the tangibility of Paradise and the Fire unless they had already denied the gathering, the bodily return and the return of the spirits to their bodies.

One of the clearest and most obvious evidences of this reality is the way in which the Qur'ān describes both Paradise and the Fire, and it is a way that makes some people enquire about the wisdom behind the Qur'ān following it and adhering to it. The wisdom behind it is that it expresses how the blessings of Paradise are tangible and material and experienced by both the body and the spirit together, and the punishment of Hell is also tangible and material and experienced by the body and the spirit together, and it emphasises this reality with the most powerful emphatic styles in the Arabic language.

Reflect on how these verses describe Paradise and its people: **"Some faces on that Day will be radiant, well-pleased with their efforts in an elevated Garden where no prattle is ever heard. In it is a gushing spring and raised-up couches, and set-out goblets, and lined-up cushions, and spread-out rugs"** [al-Ghāshiyah 88:7-16]. There are also these verses: **"And the Companions of the Right: what of the Companions of the Right? Amid thornless lote trees and fruit-laden acacias and wide-spreading shade and outpouring water and fruits in abundance never failing, unrestricted. And on elevated couches..."** [al-Wāqī'ah 56:27-34].

What is the wisdom behind describing all these particulars of the Paradise and its blessings when it is known that if one of us wanted to describe one of the manifestations of blessings he might not find himself in need of going into all these particular details in his description?

The answer is that it is the utmost that Arabic style can possibly express in emphasising that the blessings of Paradise are something palpable and tangible in which people live with all of their senses and feelings. It is not just a spiritual meaning, as is imagined today by some people who want to adopt a middle position in their theology between faith and atheism. In reality, it is atheism itself dressed up in this foolish garb.

Then, reflect on how these verses describe the Fire and its people: **"Some faces on that Day will be downcast, labouring, toiling endlessly, roasting in a red-hot Fire, drinking from a boiling spring. They have no food but a bitter thorny bust which neither nourishes nor satisfies"** [al-Ghāshiyah 88:2-7]. and these other verses: **"Then you, you misguided, you deniers will eat from the tree of Zaqqūm, filling your stomachs with it and drink scalding water on top of it, slurping like thirst-crazed camels. This will be their hospitality on the Day of Judgment!"** [al-Wāqī'ah 56:47-48] and His statement: **"As for those who reject Our signs, We will roast them in a Fire. Every time their skins are burned off, We will replace them with new skins so that they can taste the punishment. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise"** [al-Nisā' 4:56].

What is the wisdom behind this detailed description in this fashion? It is also to elucidate and clarify for all of mankind that it is a material, tangible, palpable punishment in which the senses of the disbelievers will be fully immersed along with their bodies and feelings. It is not merely a spiritual torment in the way that is imagined and fancied by those who are pleased, in in an astonishing state of

delusion, to ascend a pulpit of the delusion that they established over years of their short lives and with their limited thinking, in order to bring about, by their decision, a narrative about this entire universe and about the reality of life and death and what follows them, and then the reality of what has come regarding Paradise, the Fire, the reckoning and the punishment. It is as if they are Allah's partners in the planning of the universe and not an insignificant creation from amongst the millions of created being that have lived for just a wink of the universe's lifespan and before that were non-existent in the folds of the universe. Then they are transformed into a corpse inside the earth waiting for the destined time and the promised day!

This is the first reality.

The second reality: both Paradise and the Fire are eternal and have no end

Indeed the blessings of Paradise are everlasting and eternal and have no end, and the punishment of the Fire is everlasting and has no end. The verses in the Allah the Exalted's Book that clarify this matter are very many indeed.

These include the Exalted's statement: **"Those who believe and do right actions will have the Gardens of Firdaws as hospitality, remaining in them timeless, for ever, with no desire to move away from them"** [al-Kahf 18:107-108]. And the Exalted's statement: **"The evildoers will remain timelessly, forever, in the punishment of Hell. It will not be eased for them. They will be crushed there by despair"** [al-Zukhruf 43:74-75]. and the Exalted's statement: **"They will call out, 'Mālik,⁽¹⁾ let your Lord put an end to us.' He will say, 'You will stay the way you are'"** [al-Zukhruf 43:77].

The Sunnah has brought more emphasis of this reality, and that is in several ḥadīths, including what the two Shaykhs have related

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on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {When the people of Paradise have gone into Paradise and the people of the Fire have gone into the Fire, death is brought and placed between Paradise and the Fire. Then it is slaughtered and then a caller calls out, 'O people of Paradise! There is no death. O people of the Fire! there is no death.' The people of Paradise thus increase in joy and the people of the Fire increase in grief}.

Regardless of whether the embodiment of death and its slaughter will literally be in this way or it is an allusion meaning that will be eliminated and removed from existence, the ḥadīth, nevertheless, contains the most profound emphatic styles to show that both Paradise and the Fire are eternal. Still, we see no good reason to delve into interpreting the outward purport of the ḥadīth.

However, those who will be forever established in Allah the Exalted's punishment are the disbelievers, in their various sects and denominations, such as the idolaters, the atheists and the People of the Book who do not believe in the Prophethood of all the Prophets. As for the disobedient from amongst those who believe in Allah, His Messenger, His Books, the Last Day, their final destination, however long their punishment may be, is Allah's forgiveness and His Paradise⁽¹⁾.

(1) Beware of letting your mind become infected with the mental derangement that some hypocrites and ignorant people suffer from in claiming that the People of the Book are believers and that they are another group separate from the disbelievers, and thus they will not endure any punishment and they will not be in the Fire eternally. This claim is a gross challenge against Allah the Exalted's statement: **"Those who disbelieve, from the People of the Book and the idolaters, will be in the Fire of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, forever. They are the worst of creatures"** [al-Bayyinah 98:6]. The verse has broken the disbelievers down into the People of the Book and the idolaters and then it has included all of them in this sublime threat.

Maybe this statement of the Exalted has given you cause for doubt: **"As for those who are wretched, they will be in the Fire, where they will sigh and gasp, remaining in it timelessly, forever, as long as the heavens and earth endure, except as your Lord wills. Your Lord is the Doer of what He wills. As for those who are glad, they will be in the Garden, remaining in it timelessly, forever, as long as the heavens and earth endure, except as your Lord wills: an uninterrupted gift"** [Hūd 11:106-108]. This is because of the outward purport of His statement: 'except as your Lord wills', an exception to eternity, and it contradicts what the other verses and established ḥadīths have affirmed and what the Muslims have agreed upon.

The answer is that it is an exception from His statement 'wretched' in the first verse and from his statement 'glad' in the second verse. In other words, all the wretched are eternally in the Fire apart from those whom Allah has willed not be therein eternally, and they are the disobedient from the people of faith and monotheism, as is evidenced by the several other evidences. All the people of gladness are eternally in Paradise apart from those whom Allah has willed to be punished in the Fire for a period of time before that, and they are those whose lives were inundated with disobedience and the burdens of sins from amongst the believers and the intercession was not written for them initially.

The exception did not come in the form 'except whom your Lord wills', as the outward purport of the exception would require, because what is meant by the exception is merely the number and not the individuals themselves such that they would be regarded as having intellect. It is like the Exalted's statement: **"...then marry what pleases you, two, three or four."** [al-Nisā' 4:3] Women are referred to as 'what' when what is being considered therein is the number and not the individual.

on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {When the people of Paradise have gone into Paradise and the people of the Fire have gone into the Fire, death is brought and placed between Paradise and the Fire. Then it is slaughtered and then a caller calls out, 'O people of Paradise! There is no death. O people of the Fire! there is no death.' The people of Paradise thus increase in joy and the people of the Fire increase in grief}.

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This, then, is the totality of the unseen realities that man must be aware of and be convinced of with firm conviction, after passing the stage of faith in Allah, His Messenger and His Books. It is not rationally possible to separate faith in Allah from faith in these unseen matters, as they are clearly inseparable according to any sane person.

* * *

And Finally: Apostasy and Its Causes

Introduction:

You have learnt through studying the previous four sections of this book that Islam has pillars and fundamental requirements without which it is not completed. By fundamental, we mean that which is known of the religion by necessity. Perhaps you have noticed that these pillars and requirements are distributed amongst these four sections, whose issues have been elucidated in detailed fashion.

It is clear that if Islam cannot be realised except with its pillars, and the fundamental requirements of those pillars, then it is absent if any of these pillars or requirements is absent.

Then, if we look and find that any of them are absent fundamentally, or not preceded by that which would contradict it, such as certainty in it, then this is original disbelief, and it and the person who bears have specific rulings that are known in their proper place in the books of Islamic law. As for when any of them are lost unexpectedly, i.e. after complete certainty in them, this is apostasy, which is the focus of our discussion now.

We are not going to discuss the rulings regarding apostates here, for the scope of that discussion is in the books of law. Rather, our discussion here is confined to elucidating the causes of apostasy and what necessitates it.

The axis of these causes:

Know that these causes, however many or diverse they may be, all go back, whether negative or positive, to two standards:

The first of them is Allah's statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him but He forgives whoever He wills from anything other than that"** [al-Nisā' 4:48].

The second of them is what the evidences of the Noble Qur'ān and the Purified Sunnah manifest, such as it not being possible for judicial rulings in this world to be practiced unless they are based on obvious clear proofs, and that Allah has not granted mankind anything beyond that command. Thus, it is not for anyone to issue a ruling that someone is a believer or a disbeliever based on unclear or unseen matters. Rather, it cannot be done until the relied-upon proofs in the Book or the Sunnah are manifest, so that they can be acted upon in the abode of this world.

The first standard:

It has been disclosed to us that that which makes someone a disbeliever—and it is what necessitates eternity in Allah's punishment on the Day of Standing—is everything that is an expression of associating partners with Allah the Exalted in His essence or any of the attributes of His lordship. Included in this ruling, by way of primary indisputable analogy, is the denial of Allah's existence, Mighty and Majestic is He, and it comes under the ruling of attributing a defect to Him, which clearly contradicts Allah's attribute of divinity, Mighty and Majestic is He.

Indeed, rejecting the Creator, Mighty and Majestic, and what comes within its rulings in terms of stripping the attribute of perfection from Him, comes under what the same verse indicates, and the indication is found in His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"...but He forgives whoever He wills from anything other than that"** [al-Nisā' 4:48].

Thus He, Glorified and Exalted, has opened the door of forgiveness for whoever's disobedience is below the level of associating partners

with Him, Mighty and Majestic, i.e. less serious. Therefore, the sins that are more wicked than associating partners with Him, Mighty and Majestic is He, are attached to its ruling, and they are confined within denying the existence of the Creator completely and in attributing any of the attributes of deficiency to Him, such as lying, incapacity, oppression, death etc.

As for other acts of disobedience, which are less than associating partners with Allah, Mighty and Majestic, all of them come under the possibility of Allah pardoning them, however varied and diverse they may be. Hence, the one who is involved in these or one of these is described as being a disbeliever or apostate.

Therefore, based on this comprehensive verse, we understand the generalities of the verses that outwardly indicate that those who commit major sins will enter the Fire eternally on the Day of Standing. These include the Exalted's statement: **"As for anyone who kills a believer deliberately, His repayment is Hell, remaining in it forever. Allah is angry with him and has cursed him, and has prepared for him a terrible punishment"** [al-Nisā' 4:93]. and the Exalted's statement: **"Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down, such people are unbelievers"** [al-Mā'idah 5:44]. and His statement, Mighty and Majestic is He: **"Those whose scales are light, they are the losers of their selves, remaining in Hell timelessly, forever"** [al-Mu'minūn 23:103].

In other words, the first verse is referring to the killer who sees it as lawful to kills and persists with that belief of his without repenting. The second verse is talking about those who turn away from Allah the Exalted's ruling by denying it and rejecting it. The third verse means those who die upon any of the meanings of idolatry, or upon that which is worse, such as denying His existence, Mighty and Majestic is He.

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As for the second standard:

It is to make the competencies of man as a ruler, whether as a judge or mufti⁽¹⁾, understood in terms of applying the first standard to the rest of humanity.

What do you think are the indications and clear proof upon which it is permissible for a ruler or judge, for example, to establish a ruling that someone is guilty of disbelief or apostasy?

This standard makes it clear to us that the indications upon which it is permissible to rely in deciding this weighty ruling and what follows it in terms of other weighty rulings are only the indications that are unequivocal and decisive.

Thus, there is no value, in this field, in the indications of insight and anticipation, nor in any of the indications that would necessitate something unless the necessity is decisive and there is no scope for that which necessitates to be absent from that which is necessitated.

Therefore, a conclusion cannot be drawn from any act of disobedience, however great and however long the disobedient person persists in it, that the person is a disbeliever or apostate, because the evidence is more general in this case than what is claimed. For example, a man might be carelessly involved in various kinds of disobedience and responding to his own levity and the recalcitrance of his ego, but at the same time his firm conviction in Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is sound and the fundamental elements of his Islam are abundant.

A conclusion cannot be drawn from any indication of trickery or manifestation of hypocrisy, however manifold and however long it continues, that someone is guilty of disbelief which would necessitate a judicial ruling in the abode of this world. Rather, it is not permissible until there is firm, decisive conviction that that individual is a disbeliever, even without a sequence of judicial rulings against him, unless this trickster or hypocrite involves himself in what the

(1) (tn): i.e. someone qualified to give legal opinions.

Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, called, 'blatant disbelief'⁽¹⁾, i.e. obvious and disclosed, and at that point the judgement can be given that this person is guilty of disbelief or apostasy.

One of the prominent evidences of this principle is what Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Usāmah ibn Zayd, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, sent us out in a squadron. We then engaged in battle with the tribe of Juhaynah. I caught hold of one man and he said, "There is no god but Allah". Then I pierced him with my spear and I did not feel right about it. I then mentioned this to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {He said 'there is no god but Allah' and you killed him?} I said, "O Messenger of Allah, he only said it because he was scared of my weapon." He replied, {Did you open up his heart so that you would know whether it said it or not?} He then kept repeating it until I wished I had become Muslim that day'.

Something similar has been related by Mālik in the *Muwaṭṭā'* from 'Aṭā' ibn Yazīd al-Laythī on the authority of 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Adī ibn al-Khiyār that a man whispered something to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and we did not know what he whispered until the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said it out loud. He was seeking his advice regarding killing a man from amongst the hypocrites, so the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {Does he not testify that there is no god but Allah?} He replied, 'Indeed, but he has no testimony.' He then said, {Does he not pray?} He replied, 'Indeed, but he has no prayer'⁽²⁾. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then said, {Those are the people whom Allah has forbidden me from}.

(1) (tn): Ar. *kufṛ bawāḥ*.

(2) (tn): i.e. this man's testimony of faith and prayer are not sincere.

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One of the prominent evidences of this principle is what Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah and Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Usāmah ibn Zayd, who said, 'The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, sent us out in a squadron. We then engaged in battle with the tribe of Juhaynah. I caught hold of one man and he said, "There is no god but Allah". Then I pierced him with my spear and I did not feel right about it. I then mentioned this to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {He said 'there is no god but Allah' and you killed him?} I said, "O Messenger of Allah, he only said it because he was scared of my weapon." He replied, {Did you open up his heart so that you would know whether it said it or not?} He then kept repeating it until I wished I had become Muslim that day'.

Something similar has been related by Mālik in the *Muwatṭā'* from 'Aṭā' ibn Yazīd al-Laythī on the authority of 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Adī ibn al-Khiyār that a man whispered something to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and we did not know what he whispered until the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said it out loud. He was seeking his advice regarding killing a man from amongst the hypocrites, so the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, {Does he not testify that there is no god but Allah?} He replied, 'Indeed, but he has no testimony.' He then said, {Does he not pray?} He replied, 'Indeed, but he has no prayer'⁽²⁾. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, then said, {Those are the people whom Allah has forbidden me from}.

(1) (tn): Ar. *kufṛ bawāḥ*.

(2) (tn): i.e. this man's testimony of faith and prayer are not sincere.

There is also his statement, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that has been related by the two Shaykhs. The wording of al-Bukhārī is, {I am only a man and you bring your disputes to me. Perhaps one of you is not as good as the other in presenting his argument and thus I give a judgement based on what I hear. Thus, if I give a judgement that would mean actually mean someone taking his brother's right, he should not take it. By doing so he will spare himself a portion of the Fire}.

The application of this principle in his guidance, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, includes how he dealt with the hypocrites, which was based on the outward indications of Islam that they wrapped themselves in, and he stopped there. He did not delve into any of their secrets, however manifest the traces and hints of those secrets may have been.

Applying these two standards:

The actions and behaviours that necessitate apostasy, based on these two standards, can only be: statements, actions and that which can fall within the scope of mockery and contempt.

As for statements, they include every unequivocal expression that denies one of the pillars of Islam⁽¹⁾ or faith⁽²⁾, or denies one of the Islamic rulings that are known of the religion by necessity and spontaneously, such as deeming fornication to be permissible, or killing someone without right, or usury in general, with an expression that is unequivocal and decisive stating as such.

These statements are either going to fall within the meaning of associating partners with Allah, such as someone who denies Allah's oneness, Mighty and Majestic is He, or that which is more wicked than associating partners with him, such as someone who denies the Creator's existence, or that which is on the same level

(1) (tn): i.e. the five pillars of Islam.

(2) (tn): i.e. the six pillars of *īmān*.

as associating partners with him, such as someone who denies the decisive, unequivocal, well-known rulings in Allah's Book, Mighty and Majestic is He, as denying any of that can only come about by denying something from the Qur'ān itself.

As for actions, they are everything that bears a decisive indication of something that contradicts one of the pillars of faith or Islam, such as prostrating to an idol or wearing something that is specific to the people of other religions, such that it bears a known religious meaning, or doing any of the acts of worship that the people of false religions perform. All of these actions are a clear indication that is no less than the indication of speech, and they indicate things that contradict submission to the pillars of faith and Islam, and submission to everything that is established and known of the religion by necessity.

As for that which falls within the scope of mockery and contempt, in reality they fall within the group of statement and actions but they have been singled out as constituting a third type, due to the lack of seriousness that is found in the previous types.

The rule for mockery or contempt that necessitates apostasy is that one of the pillars of Islam or faith or one of the established rulings of Islam that are known spontaneously and by necessity by everyone is mocked or shown contempt in any obvious way.

Therefore, anything that if expressed in speech would necessitate apostasy, if expressed through mockery or contempt it would necessitate the same consequence, such as mocking the prayer, or the pilgrimage or zakāt, or Paradise or the Fire, or showing clear contempt for the Qur'ān in a statement or action, or making light of Islamic law in general, or showing contempt for any of the prominent sacred rites of Islam, such as the call to prayer, mosques, invocations etc.

It is important to know that everything that comes within the scope of actions that make one a disbeliever, or mockery or contempt that

would make one a disbeliever, also suffice in making someone an apostate, simply by being involved in any of them merely out of his will and free choice, regardless of whether what it indicates is established in his mind or not. This is acting in accordance with the second standard, which we have clarified. Thus, both actions that make one a disbeliever and manifestations of ridicule of any of the pillars of the religion are a clear, unequivocal indication of something that contradicts the Islamic creed. If the heart is concealing that which contradicts those actions or that which appears to be mockery of the religion, then that comes under internal matters that judicial rulings have no authority over. Thus, we judge that whoever mocks any of the pillars of Islam or any of its prominent sacred rites is guilty of apostasy, and we entrust that person's inward to Allah, Mighty and Majestic. This is unless he makes clear the faith, Islam and creed that is hidden inside him, which would negate whatever he did that appeared to be mockery or an act of disbelief. Thus, this expression of his is tantamount to repentance from the apostasy that he was involved in, and this openness is accepted from and his inward state is left to Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

* * *

If you know this principle, and its point of departure, which has already been elucidated, you will not get lost in the particulars of the many examples, as you will be able to describe them according to what we have clarified. Thus, it is clear to you which of them necessitate apostasy and which of them do not necessitate it.

Let us present one of these many particulars, which is often delved into and asked about by many people today in terms of its ruling, and it is ruling by other than what Allah has legislated.

What is the ruling for someone who rules, with regards to himself, by other than what Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has legislated, or with

regards to a member of his family, or with regards to those he has authority over, such as the leader of tribe or a ruler over his subjects?

This requires examination, for if this ruling is accompanied by decisive evidence that this person replaced Allah the Exalted's ruling with something else out of rejection of Allah, Mighty and Majestic, or out of claiming that the rulings of Islam are not suitable for life, or to show it disdain or contempt—that ruling, for someone who judges by something else, is known by everyone to be from the religion by necessity—and it is one of those matters that necessitate apostasy from Islam, even if it accompanied by repetition of the testimony of Islam, or performance of acts of worship, such as prayer and so forth, unless the person repents by refraining from that same cause, by declaring, contrary to what comes from him, that the entire Revealed Law of Islam is suitable for life, that whatever judgement he gave was a false ruling, and that the established truth is what Islam has brought.

As for when the ruling is not accompanied by decisive evidence of rejection, disdain and contempt, in that it is possible that the person turning away from what Allah has commanded is doing so out of carelessness, or responding to the levity of his ego and its passions, or fleeing from being restricted by the restriction of the Islamic Revealed Law. It is not permissible to declare this person a disbeliever, just as it is not permissible to apply any of the rulings of apostasy to him, whenever the evidences of this possibility are weak.

That is because the axis of the matter is in the foundation of both disbelief and Islam, which is theology. Thus, if the consequence of a statement or an action is that such a person is adjudged to be disbeliever, that is because the statement or action decisively indicates a belief that would make someone a disbeliever. If it does not bear any decisive indication, it cannot possibly result in a ruling of apostasy or disbelief against him, and instead it is iniquity and

disobedience while transferring the inward of the matter to Allah, Mighty and Majestic.

Imam Aḥmad clarified this matter by saying, 'Whoever says that wine is lawful is a disbeliever. He is asked to repent. Thus he repents and if he does not, he is executed. This understanding applies to anyone who would not be ignorant of something being impermissible, due to what we have mentioned. As for someone who eats pork or carrion or drinks wine, he is not judged to be guilty of apostasy simply by doing so, regardless of whether he does it in the abode of war or the abode of Islam, because it is possible for him to do such a thing while being convinced that it is unlawful, just as he can with any other unlawful matter'⁽¹⁾.

This is the summary of what Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have agreed upon, and they are the vast majority of the scholars of the Muslim, regarding the matter of apostasy and what necessitates it. Those who deviate from them are the Khawārij and the Wa'idiyyah. The first cult declared people disbelievers if they committed major sins. The second cult judged that iniquitous people would be in the Fire for all eternity, relying on the outward purport of certain verses which we have already elucidated and reconciled with the Exalted's statement: **"Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him but He forgives whoever He wills from anything other than that"**⁽²⁾ [al-Nisā' 4:48].

(1) *Al-Mugnī* by Ibn Qudāmah (8/549)

(2) See the exegesis of al-Fakhr al-Rāzī and Ibn Kathīr regarding the Exalted's statement: "Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him..." and the Exalted's statement: "Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down, such people are unbelievers". and see al-Umm by al-Shāfi'ī (7/167 and 169), al-Furūq by al-Qarāfi (4/114), Ḥāshiyat Ibn 'Ābidīn (3/291), al-Mughnī by Ibn Qudāmah (8/549) and al-'Alām fī Qawāfi' al-Islām by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī.

Conclusion and Upshot

There is no Sovereignty Except for Allah And Man's Duty to Implement Allah's Rule on Earth

Now, and you know for certain all of these realities that we have finished presenting, elucidating and weighing on the scale of the scientific method, reinforced by their evidences and proofs that are required by the intellect. Thus, you have become certain of the existence of the Sublime Creator, may His majesty be manifest. Then, after that, you became certain that He has not created this universe out of frivolity, and frivolity does not befit Him at all, and that man—and he is the master of created things in the universe—must be charged with a specific duty whose affair is the affair of all other created beings and he must be responsible for them in front of the Creator, may His majesty be manifest. Then you contemplated the history of time and its events and you became certain of the Prophethood of the Prophets who have been sent throughout that time. A requirement of that is to be certain of this that they have been sent to mankind with, such as the creedal realities about the universe and life and the legislative rulings whose establishment is sought in this life, and the warning against turning away from any of it under penalty of the immense punishment that is threatened on the Day of Promise.

Now, after you have become certain about all of that, does the least doubt enter your mind that the ruler is Allah alone and that He is the One Who possesses legislative authority in the universe? Can you deny this and claim that sovereignty in this life is only for man and that he legislates for Himself, and then combine between this denial and having faith in all the realities that have been mentioned?

I do not think you are able to stubbornly insist and claim that it is possible to combine between that denial and this faith, and I do not think any sane person who is honest with himself would do so.

Therefore, sovereignty is for Allah alone. He is the legislator for His slaves in all of their affairs, those connected to this life as well as the Hereafter, and He is the One Whose refuge is sought to solve each and every one of their problems and to establish every arrangement and constitution of their lives. Whoever rejects this is a disbeliever in Allah and His Messenger, even if he claims with his tongue that He believes in Allah and His Messenger and he prays, performs the pilgrimage and fasts. This has been established by the evidences of the intellect as well as those transmitted from the Book and the Sunnah, and all Muslims have made consensus on it.

In affirming this truth, it suffices us to listen to these verses from Allah the Exalted's Book:

"Do you not see those who claim that they believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down before you, still desiring to turn to a satanic source for judgment in spite of being ordered to reject it? Satan wants to misguide them far away. When they are told, 'Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger', you see the hypocrites turning away from you completely. How will it be when disaster strikes them because of what they have done, and they come to you swearing by Allah: 'We desired nothing but good and reconciliation'? Allah knows what is in such people's hearts so turn away from them and warn them and speak to them with words that take effect. We sent no Messenger except to be obeyed by Allah's permission. If only when they wronged themselves they had come to you and asked Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have Allah Ever-Relenting, Most Merciful. No, by your Lord, they are not believers until they make you their

judge in the disputes that break out between them, and then find no resistance within themselves to what you decide and submit themselves completely" [al-Nisā' 4:60-65].

That is because is Allah's will, Mighty and Majestic is He, willed that He make a manifestation of His divinity and His attributes out of this universe. Thus, He decreed that some of this universe be a manifestation of that merely through creation and being brought into existence, like what we see from the creation of the heavens and the earth and the creation of man along with the thinking and intellect that has been placed in him. He decreed that another part of it be a manifestation of that by means of command and legal responsibility, which are addressed to the intellect and the will. This is what you see in Allah the Exalted's legislation and His system, with which He has obligated His slaves to establish His governance on earth based on their foundations. All of that is by His two divisions, the manifestation of Allah divinity and His justice, His mercy, His severe punishment and many of His attributes. Everything that happens in the universe in terms of fighting, oppression, misery and warnings of annihilation and destruction are nothing but the result of man turning away from Allah the Exalted's ruling and His legislative system, which He has committed and entrusted to man in order to establish governance on earth based on their foundations and administer the universe in accordance with them.

Man's duty:

Therefore, what is man's duty in this world with regards to this established reality? His duty is only implementation! He is responsible for implementing every letter of the law that has been sent down to him and adhering to it. He does not resort to personal reasoning therein unless there is a matter that requires it and he does not resort to consultation in an opinion or a ruling unless there is no unequivocal text in the Book or the Sunnah and there is no consensus.

This duty is concerned with pursuing slavehood to Allah, Mighty and Majestic, and to violate it and rebel against it is to declare oneself a deity and transgression itself. This is because when man turns away from this implementing duty of his in order to indulge in laying down another legislation for himself, he only deviates from the authority of his Lord and tries to free himself from slavehood to Him. Then He makes himself a partner with Allah in legislating and ruling!

In this regard, the hypocrites have an astonishing and curious way out,

One of them will say, 'Allah has only made His slaves legally responsible for establishing the law of love and justice and stay away from places of oppression and tyranny.'

Thus, we must draw a way towards these two objectives according to our opinion and according to what is required by the circumstances and benefit. In other words, he is saying that Allah has only made us legally responsible for the ends. As for the means to them, we are the one who choose them and lay them down.

By my life, indeed all the nations of the earth, from the east and the west, implement Allah's command and establish His ruling based on this foundation of understanding. Thus, there is no nation, believing, disbelieving or atheist, except that it claims that it desires, in its orientation and legislation, to achieve justice in the best way possible and to establish the pillars of peace in the best way possible. They only differ from one another in their choice of means and methods, and that is something that Allah has left for His slaves to choose according to the definition that the hypocrites claim!

However, the truthful Muslim does not say this. Indeed, he does not conceive how to understand this.

Indeed Allah, Mighty and Majestic, does not makes the ends obligatory upon His slaves unless He makes the means obligatory upon them, and He does not make the legally responsible for the

objectives unless He makes them legally responsible for the methods that are to be followed. Justice is not what man contrives based on the means that he adopts. Rather, it is the end that He arrives at by following Allah the Exalted's Revealed Law and His rule.

Know that man will not deliver himself from his responsibility towards realising this duty by devoting himself to abundant worship and performing prayers and voluntary acts of worship and invocations. All of that is dust and of no value if he is firmly convinced that it is for man to legislate in his life however he wishes, or if he is firmly convinced that Allah's ruling and commands are not suited to mankind's situation today. All Muslim agree, based on the decisive evidences, that someone who believe this is an apostate and outside the fold of Islam.

A false excuse:

Others make an excuse for their turning away from Allah's legislation, stating that it is a legislation that is unsuitable for application, and that history is a proof that it is unsuitable. They elucidate this historical proof of theirs by saying, 'Throughout Islamic history, Islamic society has not been realised as Islam desires apart from a few short, disparate periods of time. They include a few years towards the end of the life of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, up until the end of the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and then a few years during the time of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz. As for between those times and what came after them, Islam has been incapable of presenting itself and imposing its authority.'

This false excuse bears no semblance of reality or fact.

That this is the case is lost on those who make this excuse, on account of the fact that they do not want to see Islam being applicable one day. In other words, they hate the Islamic way before any discussion or excuse, such that if it were said—while they make this

excuse of theirs—that the Islamic system will be applied and acted upon without any problem or difficulty, they would burst into loud laments, because the system will then become applicable and not merely a theory as they stress.

However, the falsity of this excuse is clear, in spite of them shutting their eyes from what we have mentioned.

The Islamic society remained established from the moment the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, established it and it remained so throughout most of Islamic history. Islamic rule and society remained established throughout the age of the Companions and the Followers and the era of the Umayyads and then the age of Abbasids, and it remained in force until the early period of the Ottoman caliphate. That was a continuous, uninterrupted course that was not broken up. However, establishing Islamic society is one thing and being free of sins and misdeeds is something else.

As for the establishment of the Islamic society, it is the general administration therein based on the foundations of Islamic rule and its Revealed Law, and that the Islamic dye is extended over the various institutions of the society, its markets and its outward bearings. Thus, there is no usury in its transactions and, wine is not visible and no abominations are committed openly. Furthermore, the sacred rites of the religion are complete and unrestricted. All of this was applied throughout the period of history that we have mentioned. It is known to anyone who has the least educational insight into our Islamic history and its documented facts.

As for being free of sins and misdeeds, this is something that was not achieved in the age of the Companions, nor the Followers, or in any age before that or after. It is not something that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has stipulated for the establishment of Islamic rule and the implementation of its Revealed Law. Rather, Allah's

wisdom, Mighty and Majestic is He, has required that man continue making mistakes and not be infallible—apart from the Messenger and Prophets. Sometimes he deviates and then he repents and Allah veils him. Other times, he deviates and then his affair is brought into the open, and then he receives legal punishment⁽¹⁾ or retaliation is enacted upon him.

People from amongst the Companions themselves slipped and thus received the legal punishment. There were also people throughout the age of the Followers, the Umayyads and the Abbasids who deviated and committed certain acts of disobedience, and amongst them there were also those who inclined towards certain passions and desires. And under the cover of darkness and in the hidden conscience were certain sins and misdeeds, but the reason for all of that is that all people, whether they are ruled or rulers, are not infallible and not free from sin. It is not because Islamic rule was not established or the Revealed Law of Islam was not implemented.

An argument from fabricated history:

However, most of what these people (those who make this excuse) rely on in terms of information from the biographies of many of the caliphs or historical accounts, are false, invented sayings that the enemies of our religion and our Islamic history have deliberately slipped in in order to achieve what they have assigned themselves by way of studying our Islamic history and writing it in accordance with the plan that they have drawn.

Which Arab, Muslim or not, who honours himself and is free from slavehood to anyone else, would then turn away from what al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Mas'ūdī and Ibn Khaldūn have said about our history and the biographies of our caliphs in accordance with the method of narration and chain of transmission and instead lend an

(1) Ar. *ḥadd*.

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(1) Ar. *ḥadd*.

ear, in submission and resignation to what has been affirmed therein by Phillip Hitti, Van Vloten, Goldziher and Von Kramer?

Most of what is in the minds of people today in terms of the biographies of our caliphs and illustrations of our history is from what these windbags adhered to. It is nothing but from the cloth of these enemies and their fabrications. However you look for roots or pieces of evidence in the original Arabic sources, you will never find anything.

Read the reports of the conflict between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah, may Allah be pleased with both of them, and what is connected to the killing of 'Uthmān, may Allah be pleased with him, in the original, Arabic books of history and then go back and read these reports as they have been formulated and written by the European orientalists and you will see startling contradiction and astonishing fabrication.

Read the biography of Hārūn al-Rashīd in al-Ṭabarī, al-Mas'ūdī and Ibn al-Athīr and you will find yourself in front of a devout worshipper who promised himself that he would dedicate his entire life to struggle⁽¹⁾ in the path of Allah and to establish Allah's governance on earth. He would carry out military expeditions one year and perform the pilgrimage the next. In the day and the night he would pray one hundred units of prayer, as long as he was not afflicted with an illness or busy in battle. He would not decide on a matter until after he had consulted the scholars and was reassured of Allah's ruling therein. Despite all that, you will find that he was not infallible. He resorted to personal reasoning and made mistakes. He would become angry and sin. He would disobey and repent.

Then read his biography in the books of these functionaries and you will find a different man, someone who does not wake up from buffoonery and amusement, living his life amongst wine jugs and

(1) Ar. *jihād*

constantly moving about in a life of luxury and comfort⁽¹⁾.

Who should we believe; the owner and master of the house or the thief sneaking into it?

As for the intellect, knowledge, honour and nobility, all of them says, 'The one who should be believed is the owner of the house'.

(1) You will find none of this in any of the original, Arabic historical sources. You will only find the complete opposite.

Those Europeans who portray the life of Hārūn al-Rashīd in this way are thoroughly excused, for they are nothing but the descendants of those Romans whom al-Rashīd spent his entire life mobilising against in order to crush their schemes and make them submit to the rule of Islamic governance. They are nothing but the descendants of their king (Nicephorus I) who wanted to rebel against the implementation of Islamic governance and its rule in his time. He sent a letter to al-Rashīd threatening him and menacing him, so al-Rashīd wrote back to him, 'From Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Commander of the Believers, to Nicephorus the dog of the Romans. I have read your letter, O son of an infidel, and the answer is what you see not what you hear.' Then he set out for him with an army on a road that was full of snow, ice and whirlwinds, until he arrived at the gate of Heraclius, opened it, took spoils and fought until Nicephorus asked for a truce based on paying the land tax (*kharāj*) every year. When al-Rashīd had gone back and arrived at Al-Raqqah, Nicephorus broke the pledge and violated the agreement, thinking that al-Rashīd would not come back! This is because the cold was severe and the snow was covering the length of the road. The news reached the army and they concealed it from al-Rashīd, out of concern for him and themselves, but it was not long before he knew about it. He said, 'His Nicephorus done this?' He went back again, in the most severe hardship and most immense discomfort, and kept raiding and fighting until he achieved what he wanted. This is the luxury and comfort that Arab history knows about in the biography of al-Rashīd!

However, what could possibly be the biography of this caliph on the tongues of the descendants of Nicephorus today? Which sane person hopes that they would be less slanderous about him than what they say?

However, the wonder of wonders is in the phenomenon of these people who feign pride in whatever they want in terms of nationalism, patriotism and Arabism and then bow their heads and intellects in broken submission to the rule of hatred that is exuded by the descendants of Nicephorus today towards Arab history and towards the greatest and most just caliph of the Abbasid era.

As for ignorance, lowliness and disgrace, all of them say, 'Rather, the one who is to be believed is the thief occupying the courtyard.'!

* * *

This is one thing and there is something else we say, which is that we presume that we own another history, other than this sublime history that we own. We presume that the men of this imagined history did not establish Islamic society and did not implement Allah's Revealed Law and His rule, so what uncertainty therein scratches the truth that has been established by the evidence of the intellect and its decisive proof for Allah's existence and His Oneness, and that Messengers and Prophets were sent and through them mankind was made legally responsible for following Allah's rule and adhering to His Revealed Law?

Let us presume that you have discovered one of these realities based on decisive proof that that cannot be refuted. Then you have seen that all the people around you are unaware of it and not certain of it. Would the circumstances of these people around you nullify and abrogate the knowledge that is firmly established in your head?

And today, when we see so many nations all around us that do not want to believe in Islam, or indeed refuse to do other than act evilly towards it and lie in ambush for it, is that considered a defect in Islam itself and evidence that it is not applicable, or is it considered a defect in those who disbelieve, overlook and commit evil?

As for the intellect, it is says in the simplest terms and give the verdict, 'The defect is in those who disbelieve, neglect and commit evil, after the veracity of the Islamic creed had been made clear via decisive evidence, and the sane person is obliged to hate that commission of evil, criticise it and warn people against falling into its traps and harms.'

As for the reality of these people who make the excuse, their affair is like the affair of a cross-eyed person; you see him looking at the oppressor, who then swoops down and attacks the oppressed. He then stares in the face of the one who wronged but quickly grabs the collar of the one who was wronged.

It is might itself, in the eye and the intellect together, or it is a fabricated attempt seeking to pay lip service in order to veil the hatred and hypocrisy that are deeply rooted in the heart.

But what is the benefit of all of that? What is the fruit of that, what is the all-significant issue and what is the matter that is attached to the outcome, the sole outcome that lies in wait behind the curtain of death for every single human being?

It is frivolity, but not the frivolity of the youth and the insane!

It is heedlessness, but not the heedlessness of the intoxicated and the thoughtless.

Indeed, the path is one and the outcome is one, and the end is inevitable and close, and there is no hope that anyone will wake up to the significance of the matter unless the waking comes from the voice of the intellect alone.

So exert all your effort in listening to only this voice, distinguished from the din of the passions and desires of your ego, the call of your surroundings, tradition and any psychical knots, and the screams of arrogance and bigotry. If the voice of the intellect is made clear to you in the crowd of this din, the difficulty will end, the veil will be removed, the greatest reality will be disclosed and you will know its importance and its significance. At that point, you will hasten along the path of truth and you will not turn towards anyone.

If you refuse to do nothing but surrender to the crowd of voices that roar behind your ears and allow yourself to be influenced by the echoes in your ego, between a desire that wrestles between your sides

and reactions whose effects live in your being, the impression of your surroundings and the traditions that hover around you, the deep-seated partisanship that shouts inside your mind—you should spend a few days, while you are heedless, listening to this combination of deceptive chanting and then quickly wake up in a sudden moment to what the intellect has to say, such that all the other voices are cut off from you and the din goes quiet all around you. But you will see, and the time will have gone!

* * *

My brother in humanity, try and strive to contemplate my words with only your intellect. Try to distance yourself a little bit—while listening to what I am saying—from the effect of the knot that is in you, the impression of your surroundings, the traditions that have lived around you and the motives of psychical desire that try to veil your thinking.

If you do that, you will be certain that everything that I have presented to you in this book is the truth. There is no doubt about it and there is nothing false in it. You will be certain that you must prepare yourself and that this life will end and another will start. However, you might use the excuse here that you cannot...your ego overwhelms you and you cannot control it.

At that point, the solution is simple...

The matter requires nothing more than you turning towards this Creator Whose existence and sublimity you have believed in and present this incapacity of yours to Him. Do not worry about approaching Him while sullied in many dregs of dirt, for He is generous, forgiving and very giving. In a truthful, submissive, intimate conversation with Him, when there is no one between you, say to Him:

My God and my Creator, here I am. I have been guided to the sublimity of Your authority after being remote and astray for a long time. I hope to repent and complain to you of my incapacity. I desire forgiveness and I suffer from deviation. I yearn for purity and I am sullied, as you can see, in dirt. However, my faith has driven me to Your magnanimity, and my hope for Your pardon has made me desire to knock on your door. My outcome is to You. Remove me far from anyone besides You.

My God and my Creator, make my humble slave hood before You an intercessor for the immense neglect I have shown towards You. Make the pains of my heart, which is full of regret towards You, an expiation for the evil of me turning away from Your guidance. Look, with the sublimity of Your benevolence and Your existence, at the humility of my submission to You and the trembling of my hands before You.

My God, I have become aware of my slavehood and my lowliness after being guided to Your divinity and the sublimity of Your authority. I regret the chains that have prevented me from joining the obedient and tied me to remain in the valley of those who stray. How intense is my fear at Your punishment surrounding me and thus I go back to the misguidance of forgetfulness after the guidance of Your awakening and remembrance was granted to me. After that, I would only be aware of the evil outcome that cannot be avoided.

My God, I have come to You to seek refuge in You from You. I seek refuge in You from the painful punishment that I deserve, by the sublimity of Your mercy that You are worthy of. I have fled in terror from the evil of my soul to the proximity of Your benevolence, so do not force me to flee from Your proximity O You Who answers those who are destitute when they call on Him, Who removes evil and forgives all sins. O Most Merciful of those who show mercy!

I conclude my words with my hands outstretched towards the Creator, may His majesty be manifest, imploring Him before His noble door this call of mine as well as yours and every slave who goes back to Allah in repentance. I ask Him, and He is the Generous Lord, to make you and me firm upon this creed for whatever remains from the days of our lives, to make you and me firm upon it when the agony of death surrounds us and to make us inherit it after death.

O Allah, I entrust you with these realities that I am firmly convinced of and profess in my life, upon my death and after my death, so preserve them for me and for every believing man and woman. You have power over all things.

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Kubrā al-Yaqīniyāt al-Kawnīyah

Wujūd al-Khāliq wa-Waḥīfat al-Makhlūq

Imām Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī

■ "We will show them Our Signs on the horizon and within themselves until it is clear to them that it is the truth." Theology is the foundation of Islam, and it is based on faith in the existence of Allah the Exalted and His Oneness, and thus there is no desire to implement the rulings of the Shari'ah (Revealed Law) until after there is faith in Allah the Exalted and it has become firmly established in one's heart and affirmed by one's actions.

■ Allah has chosen man to be his vicegerent on earth and He has subjugated the universe for him. He has armed him with intellect and the means of acquiring knowledge so that he can be able to administer it and make it prosper. He has entrusted him with these means and thus he bears this trust and takes responsibility for it to the exclusion of all other creatures. The Exalted One's wisdom necessitated that these means be a double-edged sword: man can use them properly and thus prosper or he can use them improperly and thus live in failure and depravity. It also necessitated that death and life be a test that man has to deal with, after which there is his reward according to what he did, either Paradise or the Fire.

■ It is known that man's actions branch out from his imagination, and thus man's actions only follow the image of life and the universe that he has formed in his mind.

■ In this book, the author starts by clarifying his method of research in order to form this imagination, so that knowledge does not become mixed with illusion, certainty does not become confused with conjecture and truth is not veiled by falsehood. Then he continues by discussing theology, starting with divinity, then prophethood, then the universe and then matters of the unseen, avoiding going into disputed matters and matters whose time has passed while refuting the opinions and theories that oppose the theology, in his unshakeable, scientific style.